



## **Government Performance Project Releases States Grades: South Carolina Earns B; Infrastructure Hurt by Revenue Shortage**

*GPP issues state report cards. "Grading the States 2005" is the nation's only comprehensive, independent analysis of how well each state is managed.*

Washington, DC ([PRWEB](http://prweb.org)) January 31, 2005 -- The Government Performance Project's (GPP) "Grading the States" gives South Carolina a B grade on a scale of A-F for its management in the categories: Money, People Infrastructure and Information. The report praises South Carolina for its outstanding human resources administration and its competency in financial management but notes that it suffers from a revenue system that deprives infrastructure of much-needed cash.

These conclusions are based on the research released today by the GPP state report, the nation's only comprehensive, independent analysis of how well each state government is managed. The project is funded by The Pew Charitable Trusts. South Carolina can be compared to the country's other 49 states at <http://results.gpponline.org/SouthCarolina> and in the February issue of Governing magazine.

According to GPP Director Susan Tompkins, the quality of management performance by state governments is often critical to the success of a state's programs and policies. "The last few years have seen the biggest financial crisis for state governments in 50 years," said Tompkins. "The way South Carolina has reacted to this crisis managerially has had a big impact on citizens in this state and will for years to come."

The research for South Carolina showed that the state's roads are the most under-funded in the country. Its rate of state road fatalities, the third highest in the nation, is partly a result of poor transportation funding. The state has 25,000 miles of narrow rural roads that aren't eligible for federal aid and present a potential hazard for drivers and a challenge for road-repair crews. Only a small number of U.S. states have more roads to maintain.

According to GPP researchers, infrastructure performance suffers because South Carolina relies on its gasoline tax, which has not been raised since 1987, for 89 percent of its transportation spending. On average, other states in the region are far less reliant on the gasoline tax.

South Carolina's infrastructure rated only "C+", the state's lowest grade. Maintenance was identified as the weakest area, while capital planning, project monitoring and internal coordination were given mid-level grades. Intergovernmental coordination was the one strong area in the infrastructure category.

On the plus side, the GPP awarded an A-, the state's highest grade, in the people category, which covers issues related to the state workforce. The report praised strategic workforce planning, hiring, training and development and employee performance management, while it gave a mid-level rating for employee retention. The report indicates that South Carolina has an outstanding personnel system, with flexible hiring and innovative recruitment, including a new coordinated approach that tracks down hard-to-find healthcare workers.

In the money category, which covers financial management, the state received a B+, with strong ratings for financial controls/reporting and the budget process. Mid-level grades were assigned to the long-term outlook, the structural balance of the state's finances, and contracting/purchasing.



The state got a B for its work in information management — the way data is gathered, analyzed, used and shared. The report said the state is doing a good job of managing and budgeting for performance but is performing at a mediocre level in the areas of strategic direction, program evaluation and electronic government. The report noted that state agencies provide the legislature with detailed reports that yield meaningful data on performance measurement.

The GPP report, the result of a year of research by a team of academics and journalists, is designed to allow state leaders to identify their state's strengths and weaknesses, and to compare the performance of their state to others.

The GPP used data from different sources: (1) an online survey filled out by designated state managers; (2) a systematic analysis of public documents; (3) interviews with legislators and executive officials, independent citizen groups and academics. (Note to journalists: please see methodology below for detailed information on process.)

To view the complete report on South Carolina and to compare its performance to the other 49 states, see <http://results.gpponline.org/SouthCarolina>. The February issue of Governing magazine also reports on the state grades at [www.governing.com](http://www.governing.com) on January 31.

The Pew Charitable Trusts ([www.pewtrusts.com](http://www.pewtrusts.com)) serve the public interest by providing information, policy solutions and support for civic life. Based in Philadelphia, with an office in Washington, D.C., the Trusts make investments to provide organizations and citizens with fact-based research and practical solutions for challenging issues. With approximately \$4.1 billion in dedicated assets, in 2003 the Trusts committed more than \$143 million to 151 nonprofit organizations.

## The Methodology

— Grading the States 2005 — builds on a rich lode of information about performance. The Government Performance Project has collected thousands of pieces of data which, put together, paint a detailed portrait of state government performance.

The grading process for GPP 2005 built on the following steps:

• Grading against criteria. The GPP graded the states against criteria, not against each other. The team's analysts began by carefully identifying the four management areas — Information, Infrastructure, Money, and People — that are most important in achieving policy goals. In each management area, they then identified the characteristics of effectively managed governments. These criteria, defined by the best research in the field, established the grading standards.

• Refining the criteria. The GPP's research team then identified the components (that is, the subcriteria) that make up each criterion. For example, a state that manages its Money well would maintain structural balance by making limited use of one-time revenues; a state that manages its People well would retain a skilled workforce by maintaining productive relations with its employees. These subcriteria defined each of the criteria.

• Collecting the most important information on the criteria and subcriteria. The GPP's research team



then collected the data that provided the best information about the criteria and subcriteria. Researchers assembled much of the data from existing sources, including information posted on state websites and published in government reports. Some of the information came from an innovative web-based survey, in which state officials completed information requested by the GPP. And some of the information came from interviews conducted by the team of reporters from Governing magazine.

• Analyzing the information through a collaborative process. The research team of scholars and journalists then jointly analyzed and discussed the data and its implications. They combined their information and jointly assigned the grades.

• Conducting the process in transparent fashion. From the very beginning, the GPP committed to a process of transparency. The project's researchers and reporters consulted extensively with state officials before defining the criteria. The GPP published the criteria and subcriteria before launching data collection. Along the way, regular electronic newsletters kept state officials, as well as others interested in the project, on its progress. When the GPP published the grades in Governing, it provided extensive explanation of the grades and of the information used to produce them. In addition to the narratives published in the magazine, the GPP website contains deeper explanation. In the coming months, more and more data and analysis from the project will be made available on the website as well. The result is an unprecedented repository of information about state government management, which will be available without charge to anyone interested in reviewing it.

This is the third time that the Government Performance Project has graded the states. The grades in this version are not comparable with the grades in the previous phases of the project, for several reasons:

• Number of management categories graded. In the past, the GPP graded five management areas. In this version, the research team redefined all of the criteria and combined some of them. As a result, the five categories graded in previous versions do not match the four in this version.

• Emphasis on results. Previous versions of the GPP focused on the processes of state government. In this phase, the GPP focused far more on the ability of state governments to produce results. For example, in this version of the GPP, it is not enough for a state to demonstrate that it collects information about the performance of its programs. The GPP grades states on how they use that information to improve results.

Because of these two important changes, grades in this version of the GPP are not comparable with previous grades. Such comparisons should not be made; if they are made, they are certain to be misleading and inaccurate.

The grades assess the capacity of state governments, as a whole, to produce results. The grades do not represent a judgment of any individual within state government, or of any branch of state government. Many things go into the assessments, including state legal and constitutional processes, the structure of state policies and programs, the relationships among elements of the state government, and the relationship between government and its citizens.

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**Contact Information**

**Sharon Gallagher**

Sage Communications Partners

<http://results.gpponline.org/southcarolina>

215-209-3075

**Online Web 2.0 Version**

You can read the online version of this press release [here](#).