

Analytics Kickstart: Demand for Fire Services

Fort Lauderdale, FL

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The Bottom Line

Fort Lauderdale's (FTL) vision to be a safe city for all residents and visitors requires a fire services program which can meet fluctuating demand with highly effective services. Delivering fire services can be enhanced by improving the city's intel regarding calls for service, so GovEx trained the FTL team to mine the data for insights about what's driving increased demand.

Problem

The city believed it was experiencing a continuously-increasing demand for fire rescue services without an adequate understanding of underlying causes. City leaders wanted to understand why calls to the Fire Rescue system were on the rise and use that evidence to design informed strategies for reducing demand and/or optimizing the response.

Leadership

From the City Manager to the Fire Services Chief, the city's leadership team repeatedly asked for stronger intelligence about fire services demand and expressed a strong commitment to adapting services to respond more effectively.

Staffing

The project involved a collaboration between four members of the GovEx team and several members of the FTL team, which experienced a turnover of key staff in the City Manager's office during the course of this project.

Data

The project team used data from the 911 call center and dispatch data, as well as publicly-available data on demographics, transportation and tourism.

Technology

The team used Excel and PowerPoint for analysis and communication and QGIS for data hygiene issues.

Methodology

The team conducted an on-site 3-day training for staff in the City Manager's office, IT Dept. and the Fire Dept. to map the intake and dispatch process, analyze trends, and identify key drivers of call volumes. The team also looked at the relationships between demand for fire services and other variables, like: population, tourism, occupancy, and demand for other city services.

Results

Call volume is increasing but might have leveled off in 2016. Recent growth is attributable to: (1) Rescue/EMS calls, which FTL should match to patient disposition data; and (2) Service Calls, which are often inaccurately coded. With further attention to data access and hygiene, FTL could enhance its understanding of fire service demand and optimize its services effectively.