



# 2006 Ohio Partnership for Excellence – Bronze Application Government Version

~ City of Kent, Ohio ~



## *THE CITY OF KENT, OHIO: Organizational Profile*

### **P.1 Organizational Description**

In 1805, the City of Franklin Mills was established. In 1863, the City renamed itself as Kent. The City has always been a business orientated community, and strives to maintain its natural beauty by heavily investing in parks and recreation while participating in Tree City U.S.A.<sup>®</sup> for over 20 years.

**P.1a.(1)** The City of Kent is a medium size corporation located in NE Ohio, according to the 2000 census, the population is 27,906. It is home to a major university, Kent State University, which has an enrollment of 34,000 students, a vast majority of which reside within the city limits.

The city provides many services, which are standard for cities. They include the following:

**City Manager:** Administers the policy set by Kent City Council. The Kent City Charter was amended by the voters in 1975 to allow for the Council-City Manager form of government. This type of government allows the Kent City Council to set policy and hire a chief executive officer, known as the City Manager, to administer this policy.

**Budget & Finance:** Oversees the daily finances of the City as well as the collection of utility bills and income taxes. The Kent Department of Budget and Finance oversees the daily finances of the City as well as the collection of utility bills and income taxes. The Utility Billing Division and Income Tax Division are part of this department. The Income Tax Division Page has links to tax forms. The Budget and Finance Director reports directly to the City Manager.

**Community Development:** Includes activities that impact the overall development of Kent. The Community Development Department is involved with a number of activities that impact the overall development of Kent. Some of these activities include land use planning, zoning administration, economic development, neighborhood development and grants administration. This department is charged with administration and enforcement of the City's Planning and Zoning Code. The Director of the City's Community Development Department reports directly to the City Manager.

**Health Department:** The City of Kent Health Department provides numerous health-related services to the citizens of Kent. These services include annual licensing and inspection of restaurants, vending machines, public swimming pools, sanitation vehicles and multiple use housing. The Health Department is also responsible for vital statistics, providing medical assistance to indigent Kent residents, sponsoring a monthly immunization program, and administering the City's mosquito control program.

**Human Resources:** The City of Kent Human Resource Department provides partnership for the development of strategic and operational aspects relating to human resource development. The key focus of this department is on employee relations, recruitment, compensation, training and benefits. The Human Resources Department of the City of Kent accounts for the administration of the employee assistance program, the drug and alcohol testing program, pre-employment hiring activities, serves as the Administration's liaison with the Civil Service Commission, monitors compliance with equal employment opportunities, the Family Medical Leave Act requirements, sexual harassment regulations, accommodations for disabled workers under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), workplace safety standards under OSHA, and the Public Records law as it pertains to personnel files. The Human Resources Manager also coordinates employment related disputes, including all grievances and disciplinary actions as well as representing the City Administration with issues associated with collective bargaining agreements and other union matters. The Human Resources Manager is appointed by and reports directly to the City Manager.

**Law Department:** Represents the City in all legal proceedings, civil and criminal. The Law Director serves as the chief legal adviser to the Council, the Manager, and all City departments, offices, commissions and agencies. The Law Director serves as legal advisor for all City employees in matters relating to their official City of Kent duties. The Law Director represents the City in all legal proceedings, civil and criminal, and performs any other duties prescribed by the Kent City Charter or by ordinance. The Law Director drafts legislation that is submitted to



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Kent City Council for their review and passage. All legislation and legal documents acted on by the City is reviewed by the Law Director as to the proper form.

Parks & Recreation: Management and maintenance of all lands or buildings owned by the City for park or recreation purposes. The Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the management and maintenance of all lands or buildings owned by the City for park or recreation purposes. They are funded primarily by tax levies and supplemented by program fees. All recreation programs are handled through this Department. Rental of park facilities may be arranged through this Department also.

Public Safety: The Public Safety Department is responsible for enforcement of all police, health, sanitary and safety regulations as prescribed by the rules of the City or general laws of the State of Ohio. The Public Safety Director oversees the Police and Fire Departments and is responsible for administrative review of the divisions of the Safety Department. Guidance and general policy direction are formulated consistent with the needs of the community and coordination is enhanced through joint planning with the safety divisions and other City Departments. The Safety Director represents Kent on a variety of safety and planning-related issues and groups.

Public Service: This department oversees all public works and improvements, construction, engineering, and inspections. The Public Service Department of the City of Kent is in charge of all public works and improvements, construction, engineering, and inspections. They oversee road constructions, repairs and maintenance; sidewalk construction and maintenance; the City's water distribution system; the water reclamation system, and the storm water management.

**P.1.a.(2)** The mission statement is a work in progress. The values are informally discussed as issues arise. Employees are aware of all these concepts, but they are not yet part of the culture. Currently, Kent is process controlled and not result oriented.

Mission Statement: The mission statement is a work in progress. The values are informally discussed as issues arise. Employees are aware of all these concepts, but they are not yet part of the culture. Right

now Kent is process controlled and not result oriented. With that being said, this is the mission statement we currently have posted on our web site:

Vision Statement: The City of Kent is a sustainable place that has intertwined the delicate balance of economic, environmental and social vitality that form a community. Together we have created a plan based on our appreciation of a small-town lifestyle placed within the urban context of northern Ohio. Our focus on locally owned and independent businesses within the downtown area and diverse neighborhoods throughout the city provides a viable choice that preserves natural resources and the historic nature of our built environment.

We are a university community where Kent State University serves as a resource to create and support enterprises with a strong social and environmental consciousness while providing cultural opportunities for our residents. Kent is a diverse community where the integrity of neighborhoods has been protected by a balance between family homes and student housing.

The size of our community allows us to create a "walkable" community within a built environment where traffic management is possible because of the strong use of alternative forms of transportation and well-planned traffic patterns. We also are a place where the park system and community celebrations enhance our physical and mental well-being while raising our individual awareness and commitment to enhancement of the natural resources that bless this place. The strong academic tradition of our public school system prepares our youth to develop their abilities and participate in creating the future of this community.

Finally, we are assured that we will remain a sustainable community because of committed Kent residents, approachable city officials and cooperation between local government and university officials who truly have incorporated sustainable practices into the core of decision-making.

Core Organizational Values:

- That the strength of this organization is its people;
- That elected and appointed officials, the administration, and City employees are all team members of this organization;
- That all employees are valuable;



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- That services be provided in the highest professional, efficient and ethical manner by establishing and maintaining high standards of performance for excellence;
- To respect all departments, employees and citizens as being diverse but equally important;
- That the spirit of community trust and respect should guide every decision and action;
- To consider this community trust as an honor, a responsibility, and a privilege;
- That the achievement of long term goals transcends short term benefits or inconveniences;
- To encourage change and innovation that improves Kent as a place to live;
- To recognize the City Council's responsibility to make informed policy decisions for the community, with insight and integrity;
- That administrative decisions are made based on the greater benefit of the organization rather than individual departments or divisions;
- That the greater good of the whole community may outweigh the needs of individuals;
- To concentrate on the select core municipal services and evaluate new services before they are offered, to determine if they represent an appropriate role for city government;
- That improving the organization leads to improved and more efficient municipal services;
- To be patient, polite and courteous to citizens regardless of circumstances;
- To be responsive to residents either by accomplishment, explanation, or information;
- To work more on non-urgent important matters rather than unimportant urgent matters;
- To engage in community building by investing resources today for a better future;
- That the City has been commissioned to lead this community with a vision and a strategic plan while simultaneously demonstrating fiscal responsibility;
- To appreciate the community's sense of place, including its environmental and historic resources by employing sustainable development principles;
- That the community's relationships with all of its educational institutions are extremely vital.

**P.1.a.(3)** At present, employee profile information is available through the Human Resources Department, but it has not been compiled in the manner asked for. Great ideas without great people are irrelevant. Visions

and plans don't implement themselves, people do. People who choose to serve and make personal sacrifices for the "greater good" that we call community and Kent residents call home.

Taking on these responsibilities was a choice made by every city employee. They believe that one person can make a difference in the lives of many, that each of them has important jobs to do that are essential to the community, and that they matter. These are the people that work hard for you, me and everyone in Kent 365 days a year. They are everyday heroes. You may not know their faces, but you know their work; it's that place we call Kent.

**P.1.a.(4) Technology:** The City of Kent utilizes technology to enhance and aid in communications, employee productivity, and the overall efficiency and effectiveness of its offered services.

Equipment

- Fleet of vehicles
- Computer/Data/Voice systems

Facilities

- Office Buildings
- Fire Stations
- City Hall Building
- Police Building
- Libraries
- Parks
- Golf Course
- Ball Parks

**P.1.a.(5)** The City of Kent is required to meet several federal, state, and independent regulations. These regulations are listed in Table P.1.a.(5) on Page 5.

**P.1.b.(1)** The City of Kent operates under a Council-Manager form of government. The Council is comprised of seven members: three are elected at large and four are elected from wards. Each member serves a four year term. All of the City of Kent's administrative powers are the responsibility of the Council.

The Council is headed by the Mayor and is also the President of the Council. The Mayor is an elected official who serves a four year term. His responsibilities include presiding over all Council meetings, is a



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Regulating Agency	Function	Regulations
Federal	Communications	Federal Communications Commission
	Emergency Management	Federal Emergency Management Agency National Transportation Safety Board
	Employment	Americans with Disabilities Act Equal Employment Opportunity Family Medical Leave Act Fair Labor Standard Act
	Health and Safety	Americans with Disabilities Act Environmental Protection Agency Occupational Health and Safety Protected Health Information Water Purity Standards
	Schools	Reauthorization of Elementary and Secondary Education Act
	Security	Homeland Security
	Transportation	Americans with Disabilities Act Federal Highway Administration Department of Housing and Urban Development
State	Employment and Pensions	Ohio Revised Code
	Finance	Independent Audits Ohio Revised Code
	Health and Safety	Fire Fighter Standards Ohio Revised Code Police Officer Standards
	Public Records	"Sunshine" Public Records Access
	Schools	Americans with Disabilities Act Ohio Achievement Tests Ohio Administrative Code Ohio Revised Code
	Transportation	Ohio Department of Transportation
Independent Agencies	Finance	Government Accounting Standards Board
	Health and Safety	International Organization for Standardization National Fire Prevention Academy Police Accreditation

**Table P.1.a.(5)**

member ex-officio of all Council created committees. The Mayor has no administrative duties and only votes in the Council in the case of a tie.

The City Manager is appointed by the Council via a majority vote for an indefinite term. The City Manager is the City of Kent's chief administrative officer. It is the City Manager's responsibility to coordinate the daily management of the City and report to the Council. The role of the City Manager is clearly and specifically defined in the City of Kent's Charter.

**P.1.b.(2)** The City of Kent's key customers and stakeholders are listed in Table P.1.b.(2).

Group	Group Details	Key Requirements & Expectations
Key Customers	Kent Residents/Citizens	Safety Services that are effective, efficient, and timely
	Customers of Kent City Services	Having opportunities to provide input/feedback Having a reasonable tax rate
	Kent State University	Integrity and honesty Equality and fairness Courtesy
Stakeholders	City Manager	Courtesy Professionalism Safety
	City Employees	Services that are effective, efficient, and timely Having opportunities to provide input/feedback Having a reasonable tax rate Integrity and honesty Equality and fairness

**Table P.1.b.(2)**

**P.1.b.(3)** The City of Kent can operate effectively and efficiently only if our suppliers and partners are

involved; therefore, they are a critical and essential component for our success. Our partners understand this and are thus committed to providing timely and relevant services. We rely on our partners to assist us in the value creation process because they are directly involved with our citizens and stakeholders. We also depend on them to assist us in problem solving ventures.

**P.1.b.(4)** Key supplier and customer, client, and citizen partnering relationships are same as they are in a regular business firm, except that the City does not make a profit. We concentrate on serving the needs and services for the residents. Communication mechanisms include the Internet, mail, memos, legal advertising, direct mailings, and direct person to person contact. Local traffic and emergency notifications are also made through local AM radio stations.

**P.2 Organization Challenges**

**P.2.a.(1)** The City of Kent is a regional retail, educational, industrial, and employment center of the State of Ohio. The City's population is 27,906, with a total house holds of 10,435. The eclectic music, arts, natural beauty, historic downtown, Kent State University, and an international business presence are a hallmark of the Kent community with all the unique



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pieces fitting together like a puzzle, providing superior city services to its residents and businesses especially in the areas of policing, fire suppression, emergency medical response, street repair and maintenance, parks and open space side walks and open government. All of this has lead to recognition of Kent as a model community in Ohio for its superior quality of life.

Kent maintains a competitive advantage in financial stability, capital and facility planning, and senior leadership is future focused, quality, and results oriented.

**P.2.a.(2)** Competitive success factors for the City include: organizational performance, strong working relationship with citizen volunteers, strong financial position, long-range capital planning and strong strategic planning, water management and sewage services, tax administration. Our success factors include: maintaining relations with police, fire, and trade associations and distributing our limited resources to all branches equally without concentrating on just one area.

Key changes that affect our organization include providing services driven by finance and trying to be more strategic. Also, the current brain loss from northeastern Ohio region to other parts of the country is one of the KEY changes of the organization.

**P.2.a.(3)** Competitive data from within the industry include financial benchmarking, customer surveys, neighboring cities, and trade and professional associations.

Sources of competitive data outside of government communities include staff/personal contacts, and local/regional websites.

**P.2.b.** The City has to deal with several strategic challenges:

Health Care: The laws state and federal laws have been changing, so we must keep up with these changes. In addition, the prices for these services continue to increase, so we must balance the needs of our employees against the rising costs.

Limited resources: Both the State and the federal government have been reducing City funding over the years while customer expectations have been increasing; consequently, we must do more with less. This has led us to adopt many Quality Practices which are unfamiliar to many of our employees and customers. As such, we are educating and training them in these areas while trying to put these practices into use.

Organization changes: We are trying to focus on being a business. Therefore, we are beginning to list our goals and track our results. Our goal is to deliver maximum results with a minimum cost.

**P.2.c.** We have recently begun to focus on evaluating our performance improvements. We have always had every department compile monthly reports detailing performance and progress, but these reports have never been compiled into usable organizational tool. We are in process of reviewing and compiling these documents. In addition, we are currently developing a “scorecard” which lists key processes for the City. Upon completion, this will be a valuable tool for the evaluation and improvement of these processes. We also have a yearly budget review and planning report that informally addresses performance improvements.

Employee training is provided as required. Training needs are determined by Departmental Leaders as well as the Human Resources Department. Organizational learning also occurs on an informal basis via employee and departmental interaction as well as through interaction with our customers and partners. We are in process of moving toward a Team environment which will assist us with organizational learning.