

Cost Reduction Efforts for Local Governments Police Services

Reducing duplicative services and multiple layers of local government is an efficient and effective way of lowering the costs of local service delivery to property taxpayer costs. Through the Local Government Efficiency (LGE) Program, the Department of State has had the opportunity to invest in hundreds of locally-led initiatives. For police services local officials have identified the following strategies, benefits and challenges. The sample projects listed below are past and current efforts that have been supported through the LGE program that may help others considering similar actions.

1. **Consolidation of Police Departments:** Consolidation of police departments resulting in the elimination of one or more police forces.

- Eliminates duplicative operational and administrative costs.
- Expenditures for equipment are shared rather than duplicated.
- Necessity to address different benefits of collective bargaining units.
- Possible New York State accreditation of the 'larger' department.

Project Examples

- a. The Town of Evans and Village of Angola, in southwestern Erie County, consolidated their police departments, resulting in the reduction of costs for police services, as well as providing enhanced services to Village and Town residents. When the Town assumed responsibility for providing all police services, \$350,000 was eliminated from the annual Village Budget.
- b. The Town and Village of Saugerties studied and consolidated their police departments. Village residents approved dissolution of the police department by almost a 2 to 1 margin in March of 2010 and the consolidation took effect on Jan 1, 2011. Five years after consolidation the benefits include, improved police services to all residents with significant savings for Village taxpayers, police department accreditation and a 2016 police budget that remains less than the combined 2011 town and village budgets.

2. **County Provision of Services:** County Sherriff's Office performs services, such as policing and dispatch/911 operations, formerly performed by individual municipalities.

- Eliminates cost of providing service for individual municipalities.
- Creates unified, countywide systems.
- May require software and training to integrate systems.

Project Examples

- a. The Washington County Sheriff's Office, with five local police departments, are sharing CAD and RMS software across all agencies within the County. This project is providing enhanced dispatching services and instantaneous sharing of information.
- b. The Village of Mount Kisco implemented a consolidation of its Police Department into the Westchester County Public Safety Department. The Village anticipates saving over \$2.4 million during the initial 5-year contract term.

3. **Consolidation of Dispatch/911 Operations:** Consolidation of emergency dispatch and 911 operations resulting in the elimination of one or more Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP).

- Eliminates cost of providing service for individual municipalities.
- Creates unified, countywide systems.
- May require software and training to integrate systems.

Project Examples

- a. The City of Batavia consolidated its dispatch operations into a new state-of-the-art facility in the Genesee County Sheriff's Office, creating a unified countywide system and saving the City \$300,000 annually.
- b. Schenectady County created a Unified Communications Center (UCC) to consolidate the PSAP dispatch centers in the county. The UCC reduced the number of dispatcher consoles from 18 to 12, as well as the need for equipment upgrades and maintenance costs. Some additional benefits include a streamlined supervisory structure and standardized training.

4. **Shared Services:** Municipalities share public safety infrastructure, facilities and services for activities such as training or other functions.

- Avoids duplicative capital expenditures.
- Municipalities retain independent police forces.

Project Examples

- a. The Town of Greenburgh and the Village of Dobbs Ferry in Westchester County agreed to share their investigative operations, allowing the Village to eliminate one officer's position.

5. **Regional Planning:** Countywide consolidation of police forces or regional collaboration on services.

- Rationalization of services based upon population and need.
- Avoid large capital costs associated with individually building or rehabilitating facilities.
- Ability to provide mandated services more efficiently and effectively.

Project Examples

- a. Broome County studied the feasibility of consolidating police forces in the urban areas of the county.
- b. The Central New York Interoperable Communications Consortium (Cayuga, Jefferson, Lewis, Madison, Onondaga and Oswego Counties) created a plan to sustain the highest quality, most efficient and cost effective public safety emergency communications system for the residents of the partner counties. The study considered cost savings that could be realized through shared services or consolidation of radio maintenance, next generation 911, computer aided dispatch, back-up capabilities, and the consolidation of public safety answering points.

