6-1-1979

Municipal Cost Cutters

Municipal Technical Advisory Service

CURBSIDE SOLID WASTE COLLECTION MINICOMPUTER

Municipal Cost Cutters

RISK MANAGEMENT ASSISTANCE AND WHERE TO FIND IT

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE
MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE
IN COOPERATION WITH THE
TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

PREPARED FOR THE TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE CONFERENCE
JUNE, 1979

FUNDED BY A GRANT FROM THE NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL TECHNICAL ADVISORY SERVICE

205 White Avenue Building
The University of Tennessee
Knoxville, Tennessee 37916
615/974-5301

June 11, 1979

Dear Local Official:

The materials contained here describe three outstanding examples of municipal cost-cutting or productivity programs which have been implemented in Tennessee cities. They are curbside solid waste collection, in-house minicomputers, and risk management. In addition, a description of the cost-cutting and productivity improvement services avaliable through MTAS is included. These descriptions were developed as a hand-out to supplement presentations made at a session on municipal cost-cutting at the 1979 Annual Tennessee Municipal League Conference.

For further information about or assistance with these or other municipal cost-cutting or productivity improvement programs, you may contact any of the persons listed in these descriptions or the central MTAS office at the Knoxville campus of The University of Tennessee.

Additional copies of this report are available by contacting MTAS.

Cordially,

Dr. Donald F. Norris, Project Manager
Tennessee Innovation Group*

*The Tennessee Innovation Group is a project involving the development or adaptation of "innovative" technologies in municipalities in Tennessee. It is funded, in part, by a grant from the National Science Foundation and, in part, by The University of Tennessee. Participating cities are: Alcoa, Athens, Clarksville, Collegedale, Cookeville, Germantown, Hendersonville, Kingsport, Maryville, Millington, Paris, and Union City.

CURBSIDE SOLID WASTE COLLECTION

City

Maryville, pop. 16,723, Council-Manager form of government

Problem

No specific "problem" led to the adoption of curbside solid waste collection in Maryville. In fact, Maryville's back-door collection system (using three-person crews and rear-end packer vehicles) is quite efficient relative to similar systems in other cities. Nevertheless, Maryville's City Manager, Gary H. Hensley, felt that an evaluation of his city's solid waste collection operation might lead to service improvements and/or cost reductions and that if such improvements were feasible they should be implemented. Earlier in his tenure as city manager, Hensley had initiated review of all City practices as a means of assuring sound city management; and the evaluation of solid waste collection was but one part of this broader effort.

A factor which has influenced productivity improvement decisions in local jurisdictions around the country was also at work in Maryville. Upon assuming his position in mid-1978, Hensley was faced with labor problems--including a strike and the threat of unionization--in the public works department. (Solid waste collection is part of public works.) Unlike many other locations, however, Maryville's brief experience with labor relations problems in the summer of 1978 does not appear to have been a significant contributing factor to the decision to evaluate and improve the solid waste collection operation. Rather, the decision was made by the city manager as part of an overall approach to managing the City.

Solution

The University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) was asked to analyze Maryville's solid waste collection operation and also to evaluate alternative methods of solid waste collection. The MTAS consultant who worked with Maryville, Frank E. Kirk, a specialist in public works and engineering, had had previous experience with municipal solid waste operations and was familiar with some of the "newer" technologies in the field.

The alternatives selected for evaluation, each involving curbside collection, included: (1) rear-loading packer vehicles with crews of one driver and one loader; (2) collection vehicles with mechanical loading devices with drivers only for each truck; and (3) side-loading collection vehicles with one-person crews. The City's then current operation involved once-per-week back-door collection with crews of three persons and five rear-end packer vehicles.

After evaluating the three alternatives plus the City's present operation and including the cost of providing all of the City's residential refuse customers with refuse containers, and purchasing new collection vehicles, the study recommended that Maryville institute once-per-week curbside collection using mechanical loading equipment and one-person crews.

Savings and/or Productivity Improvement

The annual savings with mechanical curbside collection over the City's present system is estimated to be approximately $132,600, including the cost of providing all customers with 90-gallon roll-out refuse containers ($38,900 on an annualized basis for five years). (See Table for cost comparison among systems evaluated.) The cost per customer per month under this system is estimated to be $1.30 v. $3.11 under the back-door pickup. The curbside pickup will also have the highest level of crew and equipment productivity (650 collections per day v. 271 for back-door pickup).

Other Benefits

It is anticipated that collection personnel will suffer significantly fewer on-the-job injuries under the mechanical system. (Perhaps as high as 90 percent fewer.) This will result in a safer occupation for collection personnel, healthier employees, improved employee morale, and potentially lower workmen's compensation costs for Maryville.

In addition, fewer employees (13.5 employees for back-door v. 2 employees with 1 backup for curbside) will reduce potential for labor-management difficulties in the solid waste collection operation and provide for greater management ability to carry on collection services in the event of a strike by City employees.

Problems in Implementation

Maryville will face several potential problems in the change-over from back-door to curbside solid waste collection. The most significant are:

(1) Labor Problems. Unless handled with care, management could find itself with major labor problems resulting from the loss of several solid waste collection jobs. Maryville responded to this issue by deciding that there would be as few layoffs of permanent City employees as possible. Several collection employees will be transferred to other City jobs (especially in the streets department where the City has a need for additional manpower) and normal attrition and termination will reduce the system of excess personnel. In addition, salaries for the remaining collection personnel will be increased to compensate for their increased productivity and responsibility.

(2) Public Reaction. Potentially at least, the public could rebel against the change from back-door to curbside collection. Public opposition would most likely come because the new system is not as convenient as the old and also because any major change in the provision for governmental services can be expected to produce at least some resistence. Further, special groups of the public, e.g., the elderly and the handicapped, could oppose this particular change because they may not be physically able to place the waste containers at curbside. To counteract these problems, the City plans to use various media to educate the public regarding the cost effectiveness of curbside collection. (In Maryville, for example, the annual savings [$132,600] generated from curbside collection are equivalent to $0.28 on the

local tax rate.) Further, the City has asked the local Community Action Agency to help elderly and handicapped residents who request assistance in placing their waste containers at curbside. Initial feedback suggests that the City will have three sources of volunteers: the Community Action Agency, the senior citizens center and local churches.

Principal Factors in Implementation

Three important factors have affected the implementation of curbside solid waste collection in Maryville. The first has been strong executive (political and managerial) leadership. The leadership in Maryville has been interested in and willing to look for new and better ways of performing municipal services and willing to respond sensibly to avert potential problems resulting from a major change in the provision of a major public service. Not only did City Manager Hensley recommend this program but the Mayor and Council in Maryville provided strong leadership and support for his efforts. Second, the City has carefully followed a well-conceived plan which has addressed both the technological (i.e., equipment, routing) and public relations (i.e., selling the public on cost cutting and improved productivity) elements of the program. In Maryville, the assistance of a qualified technical assistance agency (MTAS) proved to be of real value. Finally, amicable labor-management relations have been the rule in Maryville over the years. This has meant, among other things, that the City has responded positively to labor's valid concerns regarding such things as job security.

Current Status

Maryville is currently taking bids on mechanized equipment and 90-gallon waste containers and has begun the groundwork for an effort to educate the public about this program. It is anticipated that implementation will be completed in late summer or early fall 1979.

Applicability

Mechanical curbside collection is applicable to almost all cities in Tennessee which provide for municipal solid waste collection. Only the smallest cities might be unable to justify such a system due primarily to the acquisition costs of equipment. Even then, two or more small cities could afford to initiate such a system jointly.

Contact

Gary H. Hensley, City Manager
City of Maryville
Maryville, TN 37801
615-984-7900

Frank E. Kirk, Consultant
Engineering and Public Works
Municipal Technical Advisory Service
The University of Tennessee
205 White Avenue Building
Knoxville, TN 37916
615-974-5301

A. C. Lock, Jr., Consultant
Engineering and Public Works
Municipal Technical Advisory Service
212 North Highland
Suite 2119, P. O. Box 2784
Jackson, TN 38301
901-423-3710

COST COMPARISON: RESIDENTIAL
SOLID WASTE COLLECTION

MARYVILLE, TENNESSEE

	20 CY Rear Loaders	Mechanical Loaders	One-Man System	Present System
Number of Trucks Required	3	2	3	5
Crew Size/Truck	2	1	1	3
Truck Purchase Price	$105,000	$130,000	$192,000	$ 71,950
Depreciation Schedule	11,666	18,751	27,428	10,279
Insurance & Storage	2,250	1,500	2,250	3,750
Tires, Parts, Maintenance	3,500	3,000	4,500	6,320
Fuel, Oil & Lub	5,000	5,000	5,000	8,487
Wages	38,038	20,692	29,886	113,409
Fringe Benefits (29%)	11,038	6,000	8,670	32,888
Supervision & Overhead (6.5%)	2,474	1,345	1,943	7,372
Customer Cost for Cans & Bags	-	-	-	45,305
Containers Furnished by City	38,819	38,907	38,819	-
Total Annual Cost	$112,785	$ 95,195	$118,496	$227,810
Cost/Year/Customer	18.49	15.60	19.43	37.35
Cost/Month/Customer	1.54	1.30	1.62	3.11
Total Houses Collected	6100	6100	6100	6100
Houses/Day/Crew	600	650	450	271
Houses/Hour	75	81.25	56.25	34
Crew Hours/Week	81.33	75.08	108.44	180
Work Hours/Week	162.66	75.08	108.44	540

MINICOMPUTER

City

Germantown, pop. 17,794, Mayor-Council (Mayor-Board of Aldermen) form of government with City Administrator

Problem

The City of Germantown is a rapidly growing community in suburban Shelby County. As a result of annual growth of approximately 2,500 persons, it became clear to City Administrator Jack J. Goode and City Comptroller/Finance Director Randall F. Brewer that they needed an effective tool with which better to manage the City and with which to assure adequate management information about City services and functions.

At the present time the City of Germantown uses three separate electronic data processing "Service Bureaus" to perform certain functions. These include: (1) budget and accounting; (2) tax billing; (3) utility billing; and (4) payroll. The current annual cost of electronic data processing to the City of Germantown is approximately $16,000. The city has projected a 5 year cost of $137,000 without significant improvements or expansion of EDP services. The City has experienced a number of problems with the Service Bureaus and to the point that Goode, Brewer and the Board of Aldermen no longer feel the city can continue using them.

Solution

To enable the city more effectively to perform the data processing work that is currently being performed by Service Bureaus and to automate additional municipal functions (i.e., integrated financial management, purchasing and inventory control, police records, building records, personnel records, etc.), Germantown considered either owning its own computer or jointly owning a computer with one or more of its neighboring suburban Shelby County communities.

At approximately the same time that Germantown began considering its own computer, it was selected to participate in a National Science Foundation funded technology innovation group for Tennessee cities. The "Tennessee Innovation Group" as it is called is operated through the Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) of The University of Tennessee. The top priority municipal technology being investigated by the Innovation Group is the in-house minicomputer for small and medium-sized Tennessee communities.

Through the Innovation Group, the feasibility of using minicomputer technology was evaluated for the City of Germantown along with its neighboring cities of Bartlett and Millington. The study attempted to determine whether: (1) Germantown needed its own computer capability; (2) an in-house computer for Germantown would be cost effective; (3) it would be cost effective and/or politically feasible for Germantown to share a computer with either one or both it its neighboring cities; (4) it would be feasible for Germantown to share computer "software" with its neighboring communities; and (5) it would be feasible for the three communities jointly to support a programming specialist to assist them with their computer operations.

The study concluded that it would be most feasible for Germantown, Bartlett and Millington each to own its own in-house minicomputer and for all three cities to share in the purchase and maintenance of computer "software." The study also recommended that by using a carefully prepared contract to acquire software, it would not be necessary for the communities to hire a programmer.

As a result of the study, Germantown has decided to acquire in-house minicomputer hardware with sufficient computing capability to solve immediate management needs and with sufficient expansion capability to meet future needs for at least the next five years.

Savings and/or Productivity Improvement

It is estimated that five-year costs of the system being acquired by Germantown will be $140,000. (See Table.) These include only the costs of the acquisition and maintenance of hardware and software and do not include personnel costs. However, it is anticipated that Germantown will not only improve the productivity of existing personnel but also will be able to aviod hiring the additional personnel it would require without the system.

TABLE
EDP Cost Comparison
Germantown, Tennessee

ITEM	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	Total
Projected Costs - Present EDP System	$15,000	$17,250	$19,800	$22,813	$26,000	$100,863
Additional cost required to improve Utility Billing System	36,000					36,000
					Present System	$136,863
Minicomputer	$28,000*	$28,000	$28,000	$28,000	$28,000	$140,000

(* $15,000 hardware; $13,000 software--total costs $75,000 hardware; $65,000 software)

The study has recommended that the following municipal systems be automated during the first 12-15 months after minicomputer acquisition: integrated financial management; utility billing and services; personnel/payroll; business taxes; city auto stickers; and police records for report generating; thereafter, depending on the three cities' specific requirements, a number of the following systems will be automated: police; fire; public works; parks and recreation; building permits and inspection records.

In addition to answering immediate management needs and to providing for additional management capability, Germantown will have its own minicomputer at a cost roughly comparable to the current annual cost for Service Bureaus to perform EDP functions not fully adequately in only four areas. Finally, with an in-house minicomputer the City will be able to perform several additional functions, to establish a more complete municipal information system and to assure greater accuracy reliability, flexibility and speed in its EDP activities.

Other Benefits

It is anticipated that with the capability provided by the in-house minicomputer Germantown will be able to avoid hiring additional personnel principally in the performance of management and paperwork functions. In addition, several City departments (e.g. public works, police) will have direct and immediate access to the computer, thus simplifying and expediting their work. These and other departments will also be able to perform budgetary, inventory, scheduling, record maintenance and a number of additional functions directly on the computer terminals in their offices. And, generally, the management information capability of the City will be significantly enhanced without having to hire additional personnel.

Problems in Implementation

Thus far Germantown has faced no real problems in implementation of an in-house minicomputer system. In fact, the environment in Germantown has been especially conductive to the implementation of an in-house minicomputer system. Four factors have been observed in Germantown which may account for this positive environment: (1) an excellent working relationship between city management and city employees and the consistent support by management of the implementation of an EDP system which would be helpful to the employees; (2) a City staff consisting primarily of people without long tenure in City Hall and who thus have not had the opportunity to become wedded to "old ways of doing things"; (3) a need perceived widely in city government in Germantown to be able to respond more quickly not only to management information needs but also to citizen needs in the face of rapid growth; and (4) stong, effective leadership from the City administrator and the City Comptroller/Finance Director, with support from Board of Mayor and Aldermen, to implement the system.

The situation in Germantown is not often found elsewhere. In fact, in other cities several problems in implementing EDP system are common. They include: (1) fear of the EDP system by the employees. This fear can result from one or more of the following: fear of being replaced by the machine; fear of the machine itself; the

general fear of change (particularly noticable in older employees and in employees who have been doing the same thing for many years); and poor relations between management and the employees who will use the system; (2) Lack of support for EDP by local elected officials; (3) Pressure from local computer vendors or computer "experts" to acquire a particular computer make or system configuration; and (4) lack of adequate EDP understanding by city officials which results in acquisition of the wrong type of equipment or of a system without adequate support for hardware and/or software. (Many of these problems can be ameliorated by an EDP study by an objective outside source--not a computer vendor.)

Principal Factors in Implementation

As in the case of many other new or innovative municipal technologies, probably the most important factor affecting implementing an EDP system in Germantown has been strong managerial leadership. This leadership identified problems which lent themselves to automation; responded to these problems by investigating the potential that the city has for automation; assured that a well-conceived, carefully implemented plan for acquiring and operating an in-house EDP system was developed; and faced and ameliorated the potential problems of implementation noted above.

Current Status

Requests for proposals have been sent out on behalf of the City of Germantown (and the Cities of Bartlett and Millington) to solicit proposals for minicomputer hardware and software. It is anticipated that proposals will be forthcoming within the next few weeks and that the City will make a decision on hardware and software no later than mid-September. It is also anticipated that hardware will be delivered and that the system will be on-line in at least one functional area no later than January 1 and that additional application software will be implemented incrementally during calendar 1980.

Applicability

Except for the smallest cities in the State, the in-house minicomputer is a viable municipal technology. Even in the smaller cities, microprocessors (small desk-top computers) can be used effectively. According to at least one expert in the field, the computer should be viewed in the same way as the typewriter or the telephone--a tool to assist management--and communities should make decisions to acquire this tool on the same basis as decisions to purchase other management tools.

For cities which do not want to own and manage their own EDP systems, alternatives other than the minicomputers are available in Tennessee. These include: service bureaus, time-sharing with another organization and the Local Government Data Processing Corporation, a unique Tennessee "Innovation" in the area of meeting Local government data processing needs.

Contact

Jack J. Goode
City Administrator
and/or
Randall F. Brewer
City Comptroller/Finance Director
City of Germantown
City Hall
Germantown, TN 38138
901/754-7226

W. K. Joines, Consultant (East Tennessee)
Finance and Accounting
Municipal Technical Advisory Service
The University of Tennessee
205 White Avenue Building
Knoxville, TN 37916
615/974-5301

James H. Leuty, Consultant (Middle Tennessee)
Finance and Accounting
Municipal Technical Advisory Service
160 Capitol Hill Building
Seventh and Union
Nashville, TN 37219
615/256-8141

Michael Pentecost, Consultant (West Tennessee)
Finance and Accounting
Municipal Technical Advisory Service
P. O. Box 2784
Jackson, TN 38301
901/423-3710

RISK MANAGEMENT

City

Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County, pop. 475,500. Strong Mayor-Council form of government.

Problem

Metropolitan Nashville has seven individual governing bodies: the Metropolitan government, the Airport Authority, the electric utility, the public transportation authority, the State Fair Board, the School Board and the Housing Authority. Until 1978, each entity purchased its own property insurance and, in some cases, an entity would purchase multiple policies. For example, approximately $600 million in property value within Metro was insured with over 200 separate policies among six of seven entities. The mere fact that each entity purchased insurance separately meant that each paid more for its insurance than if the purchases were made in a consolidated fashion. Further, none of the entities had established a risk management function. Consequently, cost savings in the purchase of insurance and also as the result of other risk management activities were being lost to Metro.

Solution

In mid-1977, after a study by an independent consultant, Mayor Richard Fulton appointed a special insurance committee made up of insurance professionals and representatives of city government to study the report and recommend needed corrective action. In early 1978, he established the Office of Risk Management within the executive office of the Mayor. Following the consultant's recommendations, the Mayor hired an experienced, qualified risk manager, Mr. Robert L. Sinclair, C.P.C.U., and charged Mr. Sinclair with centralizing as much of the city's risk management function as possible and with using self-insurance wherever economically feasible.

After a serious, although from the Mayor's point of view successful, political struggle on the Metro Council, in which certain elements of the local insurance industry tried to prevent passage of an ordinance requiring Metro to purchase insurance through a competitive bidding process, the risk management program was initiated. One of the risk manager's first tasks was to consolidate property insurance for Metro itself and to request bids for the insurance. (The basic Metro property policy has a $10,000 per occurrence deductible with an annual loss aggregate of $250,000. The deductible and aggregate are funded through premium savings.) This policy was bid in January 1978 and resulted in annual premium savings to Metro of $565,000.

Savings and/or Productivity Improvement

From February 1, 1978, to January 31, 1979, the Metro Risk Management program achieved the following major accomplishments:

- A total of $1.4 million has been saved through the program. (This averages about $3 per Metro resident. See attached table.)

- Over 200 policies covering over $600 million worth of property have been consolidated into one policy.

- Property insurance for six of the seven entities within Metro is handled by the risk management office.

- A self-insurance fund for general liability and vehicle claims has been established for Metro and the State Fair Board. (A commercial insurance policy for general liability would have cost at least $600,000 in premiums.)

- A self-insurance plan has been established for the School Board to cover its general liability and vehicle exposures.

- $114,000 in claims by the city against other parties has been recovered.

- Uniform contract documents have been developed and all contracts must be reviewed by the risk manager to assure that insurance requirements are met.

- A workable claims operation has been created and staffed.

Other Benefits

As the risk management program becomes involved with employee safety and loss prevention, it can be expected to enhance occupational safety and health, reduce employee injury, and generally reduce losses. Many of the improvements noted here, although real enough, will probably not be "measurable" as they will come in the form of "avoidance" of loss, injury, cost, etc.

An additional benefit to the public has been Metro's swift response to claims. Once a report has been filed with the risk management office, prompt attention is given compared with the normal delay in dealing with insurance carriers.

Problems in Implementation

Certain elements of the local insurance industry strongly opposed Metro placing insurance through competitive bidding. Prior to the risk management program, Metro's over 200 property insurance policies had been divided among numerous local agencies and a city ordinance had prohibited any single agency from receiving more than 10 percent of the city's total premium commission. Although there was considerable debate and political activity on the Metro Council over this issue, ultimately the Mayor's proposal, with his strong support, to place insurance through competitive bidding was approved. The loss to local insurance agents in commission amounted to over $300,000 annually after passage of the ordinance and bidding of Metro's property insurance.

Principal Factors in Implementation

Two key factors affecting implementation of the Metro Nashville Risk Management Program appear to have been the strong executive leadership by the Mayor to initiate the program and to hire a qualified risk manager and the operation of risk management program on a sound professional basis by the new risk manager. A third factor worth attention is that the Office of Risk Management was placed in the executive office of the Mayor and received the Mayor's attention and support throughout its formative period. Clearly the potential for cost savings through a risk management program was an important motivating factor behind the decision to implement the program.

Current Status

The risk management function will expand its activities during 1979 to become more systematically involved in determining and evaluating areas of loss exposure, inspection of properties towards loss prevention and education of employees in loss prevention.

Although creditable loss data are not currently available for calendar 1979, barring a major catastrophe, there is the strong expectation that the program will continue to produce savings at a level comparable to those produced during its first year of operation. Further, the application of risk management techniques in future years will help Metro to avoid significant costs in such areas as the increasing costs of claims and expected increases in commercial insurance rates.

Applicability

Elements of Metro's risk management program are applicable to all Tennessee cities. Even for the State's smallest cities, in which self-insurance may not be economically feasible, Metro's attention to loss exposure and loss reduction and its placement of all insurance and ultimately risk management under a single office are applicable.

Contact

Mr. Robert L. Sinclair, C.P.C.U.
Risk Manager
Metro Nashville
107 Metropolitan Courthouse
Nashville, TN 37201
615-259-6206

METRO NASHVILLE
RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

SAVINGS

February 1, 1978 - January 31, 1979

Property Plan

Entity	Old Rates 90% of Values	New Program 100% of Values	Savings
Metro Government	$ 282,164	$ 84,293	$ 197,871
Schools	286,127 *	78,151	207,976
Fair Board	36,120	1,054	35,066
Airport Authority	75,549	6,005	69,544
Nashville Electric	81,000	31,247	49,753 **
Metro Transit	5,628	782	4,846 **
	$ 766,588	$ 201,532	$ 565,056 ***

* Includes portable classrooms
** Entered plan during year. Savings projected to annual basis
*** Loss Aggregate Fund intact at year end, therefore, transferred to savings

Self-Insured Liability Plan

Cost of Commercial Insurance		$ 600,000 est. *
- Losses Paid	$ 83,878	
- Reserves-Outstanding	83,400	
		167,278
Savings		$ 433,722

* Based on insurance bid, estimated audit premium and bid on liability coverage on the Fair Board.

Schools Self-Insured Liability Plan

General Liability and Fleet Bids	$ 280,000
Claims, Reserves and Administration Fee	39,750 *
Savings	$ 240,250 *

* Losses to date projected for full year. Program in effect less than year.

Miscellaneous

Boiler (risk retained-cost less inspection)	$ 98,500
Policies not renewed-incl. in Master Policy	11,122
Savings	$ 109,622

SUMMARY

Property Insurance	$ 565,056
Metro Self-Insured Liability Plan	433,722
Schools Self-Insured Liability Plan	240,250
Miscellaneous	109,622
Net Savings	$ 1,348,650
Interest on Savings @ 6%	80,919
Gross Savings	$ 1,429,569
Expenses (net after adjustment for income)	27,835
Actual Savings	$ 1,401,734

In addition to the actual savings, this office has recovered the sum of $114,886.63 from claims of Metropolitan Government against others.

(Source: Metro Nashville Risk Management Report, February 1, 1979)

ASSISTANCE AND WHERE TO FIND IT

MTAS

The University of Tennessee's Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) has been on the scene to assist Tennessee cities since 1950. Created by the General Assembly at the request of cities through the Tennessee Municipal League, MTAS has established itself as "the place to go" for practical, individualized, professional solutions to technical problems in municipal government.

The MTAS mission is to aid city officials in establishing goals, objectives and policies; weighing alternate courses of action; allocating resources effectively; evaluating programs; improving governmental systems and operations; and devising methods for obtaining public participation in policy decisions.

MTAS maintains a staff of municipal management consultants who have worked directly in municipal government, and they are backed up by specialist consultants. Ideally, these consultants, whose experience and expertise provide a wide range of practical knowhow in municipal affairs, are included in a city's "management team."

MTAS and Cost-Cutting

"Productivity" and "cost-cutting" have become catch phrases, especially since the passage of Proposition 13 in California. MTAS has been involved in these issues for nearly 30 years. A major emphasis of MTAS technical assistance has been to help cities provide services and perform functions more effectively and/or at lower cost. Naturally, however, certain MTAS services are aimed more specifically at municipal cost cutting and productivity improvement.

MTAS Services

The following paragraphs briefly describe several areas of MTAS assistance with emphasis on productivity and cost-cutting efforts.

General Management . . . organizational and management analyses; evaluation of insurance needs and coverage; establishment of personnel systems; wage and salary surveys; job evaluation; retirement and fringe benefit plan analyses; purchasing and inventory systems. (Services in this area are provided by MTAS' eight municipal consultants as well as five specialists in the fields of public personnel and finance.)

Engineering and Public Works . . . review of engineering contracts; review of department operations; solid waste collection and disposal studies; street improvement programs; equipment purchase and maintenance programs. (MTAS' two public works and engineering consultants respond to city requests for assistance in this area.)

Law Enforcement . . . law enforcement needs analyses; organizational and management studies; personnel function; records management; equipment evaluation. (Assistance to cities is provided by MTAS' three law enforcement consultants.)

Special Studies . . . annexation; consolidation of services; computerization; governmental reorganization; risk management. (MTAS consultants will become involved in special studies depending on their areas of expertise.)

Contact

These and other services are available at no cost to all Tennessee cities. For further information or for assistance with a specific issue, please call:

Municipal Technical Advisory Service
The University of Tennessee
205 White Avenue Building
Knoxville, TN 37916
615-974-5301