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MTAS
Municipal Technical Advisory Service
In cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League

#141
HOT topic

June 8, 2007

MTAS MOVES SALARY SURVEY ONLINE

Richard L. Stokes, Human Resources Consultant

For years MTAS has conducted the annual salary and benefit survey the same way. The survey has been a cumbersome paper process that has required each participant to fill out extensive paperwork. Typically, city officials would receive a 30-plus-page questionnaire to complete and return by a certain date. The information was then entered into a database and reports were generated upon request. The lag time from when the questionnaires were sent out to the date that data were ready for review was often from four to six months. After careful review, MTAS has initiated the first phase of our new "Online Salary and Benefit Survey Project." Phase one has entailed moving the collection of salary information online.

Several years ago, MTAS began the lengthy process of reviewing numerous compensation survey sites and negotiating with various software vendors. After careful consideration, MTAS selected the vendor that manages the Municipal Association of South Carolina's Compensation Survey, VC3. VC3 is a dynamic IT services organization that has spent the last decade delivering services to both the commercial and public sectors, and it has been a crucial partner in implementing this new online service.

What does this online move mean to you and your city? The move to an online survey provides cities with several advantages. First, the data in the survey will be the most current information. Second, cities will have the ability to modify their data at any time resulting in real-time information rather than numbers that are, at most, a year-and-a-half out of date. Third, the most beneficial aspect of the online format is the ability to browse all data, search for specific data, or select the data you want to review, such as municipality, position, salary range, fiscal budget, and much more. Finally, cities will also have the ability to download information into Excel spreadsheets at any time without having to wait.

To access the survey, enter the survey Web site (www.mtas.tennessee.edu/public/web.nsf/Search/MTAS_Salary_Survey?OpenDocument), and log in using a password that will be provided by MTAS. Your password will be e-mailed or mailed to you within the next couple of weeks. Please do not share your password with anyone else. The first thing a city representative must do upon login is update contact information and transfer previous salary data into the new salary form. This will eliminate the

need to re-enter data, especially if there are no changes. An added feature is the ability to increase salaries by COLA percentages. If the only change to employee salaries is based on a COLA increase, the city can enter the COLA amount, and the information is automatically updated. Once the data are entered, city officials will have the opportunity to review and check the data before submitting it. Once submitted, the data will be reviewed by the MTAS staff.

Phase two of the project involves generating reports. Participants will receive notification when this phase has been completed and cities can begin generating and printing reports. Phase three of the project involves collecting and reporting benefit survey information online. This phase may take the next several years to complete. More information on the collection and availability of benefit information will be provided at a later date.

The database is online and ready for you to review. If you have any questions or need other human resource assistance, contact Bonnie Curran at bonnie.curran@tennessee.edu or (865) 974-0411 or Richard Stokes at richard.stokes@tennessee.edu or (615) 532-6827.

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