

TO: Local League Presidents/LL Study Chairs
FROM: Noreen Fisher, Government Consolidation Study Chair
E-Mail: NQFisher@gmail.com
TELEPHONE: 914-725-6372

STATE CONSOLIDATION/SHARED SERVICES STUDY

The LWVNYS 2009 Convention approved a new state study on local government consolidation and shared services. Now is the time for your league to start planning so you can participate fully in the study over the course of this year. The issue of increasing local government efficiency through consolidation is quite complex. Consolidation is not limited to a simple merger of two local governmental units or the merger of school districts but also contemplates the consolidation of special districts such as fire, library, water, sewer etc., the consolidation of local public authorities, the consolidation of a municipal service without the loss of the underlying governmental units, for example, civil service hiring, assessing, IT, purchasing etc. all with the intent of reducing costs.

Local Leagues have requested guidance on how they should respond to local consolidation proposals should they arise. In an effort to assist the Leagues, a State consolidation/shared services study committee is educating themselves on this issue. Based upon their research, the committee will propose a series of questions and discussion materials which will be set before the local Leagues for consensus.

The timeline is as follows:

- September: Preliminary bibliography to local Leagues described below;
- November: Full bibliography and written materials for local Leagues
- December: Consensus questions developed by committee
- January: Consensus questions go out after approval by State Board
- January to April: Local Leagues have meetings and prepare answers to consensus questions
- April/May: Committee reviews input from local Leagues and prepares a draft position
for State Board approval at May board meeting

There is a great deal of material available on the internet, more than can be absorbed in a short period of time. We would recommend that all League members planning on participating in the consensus process visit the following websites to begin to get up to speed:

- www.nyslocalgov.com (a good overall explanation of the State initiatives)
- www.nytowns.org/core/contentmanager/uploads/Government.Efficiency.The.Case.For.Local.Control.pdf, (a publication of the Association of Towns)
- www.dos.state.ny.us/lgss/publications.htm#SharedServices (a good site with several additional reports).

If anyone has additional material that they believe would be of value we would welcome that information. It might also be instructive for local Leagues to interview their local

government managers and find out what shared services or other techniques their governments already employ to reduce costs and what they see as impediments to expanding these arrangements.

Documents containing useful information about conducting a statewide study are in *In League* (p. 105-111) in the Local League Resources section of the website and are also contained in the Appendix, beginning on pages 15-21 of the August SBR. Local Leagues should identify local chairs for the study and send their names and contact information to Stephanie Lopez at stephanie@lwny.org.