



DOA Local Government Report

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New Comprehensive Planning Tools and Grants

In this Edition

New Comprehensive Planning Tools and Grants

Help for Local Governments to Collect Unpaid Debts

Accurate Census Increases \$\$\$ for Your Community

Grant Opportunity for Fire Departments and EMS

End Your Annexation Wars with a Cooperative Boundary Agreement

Commerce Links Your Town to Funding Opportunities

DOA Local Government Report is published biannually by the Wisconsin Department of Administration, Division of Intergovernmental Relations
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The Department of Administration (DOA) is making more information and tools available to local governments to help them develop their comprehensive plans. The Department is using its webpage to make copies of other community plans easily available and worked with the University of Wisconsin Extension and others to develop a toolkit to help local governments implement their plans.

Comprehensive plans are developed by local governments and address long-term community needs, assist economic development strategies, and provide a basis for local land use regulations. Wisconsin's Comprehensive Planning Law (Wis. Stats. 66.1001), requires that after January 1, 2010 a town, village, city, or county's official mapping, subdivision regulation, or zoning decisions be consistent with the community's adopted comprehensive plan. Each community develops and adopts their community's comprehensive plan. The Comprehensive Planning Law does not mandate how a local community should grow, rather it requires public participation at the local level in deciding how a community wants to look and be in the future.

Recently, DOA posted comprehensive plans adopted by local governments from around the state on an interactive state map. By clicking a local government on the map, a user can open and read that community's adopted comprehensive plan. This will make it easier for citizens and government officials to see how other communities have addressed community growth and planning issues. As the official repository of all comprehensive plans adopted in the state, the DOA library continues to grow as more communities adopt their own plans.

In the fall of 2006, a guide was completed to assist local governments meet the "Implementation Element" of the comprehensive planning law and to aid communities in bringing their comprehensive plans to life. In the spring of 2007, an accompanying interactive "Toolkit" will be available on CD and the internet. The Toolkit will feature an index that allows local governments and citizens to zoom through a stack of publications in order to pick out the right tools to help them implement their plan.

Also, in the spring of 2007, DOA's Comprehensive Planning Program will announce \$2-million in comprehensive planning grant awards to local governments. We anticipate holding workshops this summer around the state before next fall's November 1, deadline for grants that will be announced in the spring of 2008.

To find the Department of Administration's Comprehensive Planning webpage, search the internet for "Wisconsin Comprehensive Planning" or visit <http://www.doa.state.wi.us/dir> keyword: "comprehensive planning". For more information: (608) 267-3369 or Comp.Planning@wisconsin.gov.

Help for local governments to collect unpaid debts

Recent legislative changes to the Tax Refund Interception Program (TRIP) make this program a more effective tool for local governments to collect unpaid debts. The Wisconsin Department of Revenue (DOR) Agency Setoff Program now aides state agencies, counties, and local governments to refer debts for collection which makes this collection tool more powerful for local governments.

The law, Wis. Stats. 71.935, authorizes the DOR to intercept taxpayer refunds, other refundable credits, and lottery prizes for certain state agency and local government debts. With the passage of 2005 Wisconsin Act 454, debt related to property tax can now be certified to the Agency Setoff Program. According to the act, the term "debt related to property tax" means delinquent general property taxes as defined in s. 74.01 (1), special assessments as defined in s. 74.01 (3), special charges as defined in s. 74.01 (4) and special taxes as defined in s. 74.01 (5). The term also includes any interest and penalty charged as a result of the property tax delinquency.

"This law change, covering both Real and Personal Property Taxes, provides local governments an additional and cost effective tool to ensure payment," said Cathy Bink, director of the Compliance Bureau within the Department of Revenue. "More than 565 counties and municipalities are already enrolled and more than \$17-million was collected in the last fiscal year. This program will help local governments maximize their collection efforts."

Additional information about the Agency Setoff Program is available on DOR's website at: <http://www.revenue.wi.gov/ise/trip/index.html>. Enrollment info is available in Publication 218.

For more information or assistance, please contact Susan Dukes of the Wisconsin Department of Revenue at (608) 266-9397 or susan.dukes@dor.state.wi.us

Accurate Census Increases \$\$\$ for Your Community

To ensure everyone in your community is counted, the 2010 federal census activities are beginning this spring. The census count in your community greatly influences the federal and state funding for your community for the next 10 years. The US Census Bureau wants to help local governments to ensure that all their residents are counted in the upcoming census.

The Local Update of Census Addresses Program (LUCA) is the only opportunity local and Tribal governments have to review and update the information in the US Census Bureau's Master Address File. Tribal and local governments can help ensure that the US Census Bureau uses complete and accurate information about housing units and group quarters addresses in their communities that are used by the Census Bureau to deliver 2010 census questionnaires. Participating in LUCA will ensure everyone in your community is counted.

Orientation meetings will be held this spring by the US Census Bureau to help local and tribal governments in getting all of the Federal and State funding it can! LUCA program announcement letters will be mailed to local governments in early 2007 and the Census Bureau will conduct a series of LUCA orientation workshops March through June. The workshops will explain the LUCA program, the various participation options available, and offer a demonstration of the Census Bureau's new MAF/TIGER Partnership software. By attending an orientation workshop, a local government will be able to determine which of the participation options is right for their community.

The Census Bureau has tentatively scheduled technical workshops for August through October 2007 for local governments who enroll in the program. The technical workshops are designed for people conducting the address reviews.

For more information on LUCA, visit the Census Bureau's website at www.census.gov/geo/www/luca2010/luca.html or call the Census Bureau Regional office in Chicago at (800) 865-6384.

Grant Opportunity for Fire Departments and EMS

The Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA) is working together with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) to hold workshops to offer tips to local fire departments and non-affiliated emergency medical service providers on how to write successful applications for the 2007 Assistance to Firefighters Grant (AFG) Program.

Eligible applicants for AFG are all fire departments in the United States and all non-affiliated Emergency Medical Service crews. These free workshops do not require advance registration. This is 6th year that DOA has helped at workshops with hundreds of departments participating. Wisconsin fire departments historically do well in these competitive applications.

Because DHS has made many changes to the 2007 program, they recommend all potential applicants participate in a workshop. The 2007 guidelines, when released will be available at the following web page: www.firegrantsupport.com. The application period is anticipated to open March 5 and close at 4 pm, April 6.

Two of the major changes to the 2007 program include:

- Applicants can apply in both the vehicle and firefighter operations and safety categories using two separate applications.
- Applicants that have previously received a vehicle can apply in the vehicle category again.

Scheduled DHS Workshops:

Feb. 26	7 p.m.	Green Bay	Northeast WI Technical College, Room CB213D
Feb. 27	1 p.m.	Waukesha	Waukesha City Hall
Feb. 28	8:30 a.m.	Wisconsin Dells	Wilderness Resort
Feb. 28	7 p.m.	Richland Center	Richland Center Fire Department
March 1	7 p.m.	West Bend	West Bend Fire Department
March 2	7 p.m.	Salem	Salem Volunteer Fire Department

For more information or grant assistance, contact Dawn Vick at the Wisconsin Department of Administration at (608) 266-7043 or dawn.vick@wisconsin.gov.

End Your Annexation Wars with a Cooperative Boundary Agreement

'Annexation' is a fighting word to many people and it is associated with contentious boundary, intergovernmental, and land use issues. The unpredictable nature of annexation can put neighboring communities in an adversarial position. However, many Wisconsin communities are leaving their annexation troubles behind by developing a cooperative boundary agreement with consensus on boundaries, land uses, revenue sharing, and service and governance issues.

Cooperative boundary agreements are authorized under Wis. Stats. 66.0307. The statute requires broad notice to area residents and jurisdictions, a cooperative plan for the agreement territory, a public hearing and comment period, an advisory referendum (if requested), and a public interest review by the Department of Administration. Thirty-six Wisconsin communities have adopted a cooperative boundary agreement, while another 22 communities are in the process of negotiating an agreement. Controversy over annexation has served as a gateway to the communities agreeing to cooperate rather than fight. In an effort to prevent future annexation fights, some communities are proactively developing agreements.

Communities cooperatively decide which issues are to be resolved by the agreement. For example, communities determine the size of the agreement territory, the duration of the agreement, and the agreement's terms and conditions. Local discretion results in unique boundary agreements and increased support once adopted. The agreements are viewed as the product of local vision and consensus with input from citizens and area stakeholders.

To learn more, please visit the Department's cooperative boundary agreement website at www.doa.state.wi.us and type 'cooperative boundary agreement' in the search box. For more information, contact George Hall (608) 266-0683, George.Hall@wisconsin.gov or Erich Schmidtke (608) 264-6102, Erich.Schmidtke@wisconsin.gov.

Commerce Links Your Town to \$40 million in Funding Opportunities

The Wisconsin Department of Commerce's Division of Housing & Community Development (DHCD) provides funds to improve housing conditions for low/moderate-income households and to address homelessness in the state. Working with local governments and a variety of housing organizations, more than \$40 million is distributed annually to improve housing for Wisconsin residents of modest means. For specifics about each program, check out DHCD's recently improved website at www.commerce.wi.gov/cd.

Some programs of note:

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG) Municipalities with fewer than 50,000 residents and all counties except Milwaukee, Waukesha and Dane are eligible for \$8 million in CDBG funds to support affordable housing and neighborhood improvements, home buying, relocation, demolition of dilapidated structures, and accessibility improvements.

Contact: (608) 261-6535, or Joanna.Schumann@Wisconsin.gov

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS PROGRAM The creation of new housing or economic opportunities is the goal for this program. Projects funded with this program can be supported by multiple Division funding sources. The project site should involve a variety of integrated activities and include participation by a local government, the private sector and other state or federal agencies.

Contact: (608) 267-3682 or Caryn.Stone@Wisconsin.gov

HOME INVESTMENT PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM (HOME) This program provides essential home purchase assistance and funds for necessary home rehabilitation, and other vital improvements for dwelling units occupied by low- and moderate-income households in many communities. The Wisconsin Department of Commerce awards these funds to local and Tribal units of government and local housing organizations. The program provides funding for three HOME-eligible activities - homebuyer assistance, owner-occupied rehabilitation, and rental rehabilitation for landlords to make essential repairs to units rented to tenants at or below 60% of the county median income.

Contact: (608) 267-6904 or Betty.Kalscheur@Wisconsin.gov

RENTAL HOUSING DEVELOPMENT (RHD) This program provides funds for new construction, conversion or acquisition/ rehabilitation projects undertaken to develop affordable rental units. Applications accepted quarterly in non HUD entitlement areas.

Contact: (608) 267-6912 or Meryl.Lesch@Wisconsin.gov

HOMELESS PROGRAMS/INITIATIVES The Division administers several federal and state housing programs that provide shelter and services for individuals and families who are homeless or have special needs.

Contact: (608) 266-8273 or Patti.Glassburn@Wisconsin.gov

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