



*Ohio Commission on
Local Government Reform
and Collaboration*

**Annotated Bibliography of Studies and Data on Local
Government Reform and Collaboration (National)
Kentucky - Wisconsin**

Annotated Bibliography of Studies and Data on Local Government Reform and Collaboration (National)

This annotated bibliography was prepared by the John Glenn School of Public Affairs at The Ohio State University. Its purpose is to identify organizations conducting research on local government reform and collaboration for delivery to the Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration. The annotated bibliography specifically focuses on research beyond Ohio. Entries have been placed into sections that conform to the sub-committees as defined by the Commission. Due to the interdependence of these topics, many annotated bibliography entries appear in multiple sections. Below is an example of an annotated bibliography entry.

The diagram shows an annotated bibliography entry with several components labeled:

- Title of Report (linked)**: Points to the title "A Comprehensive Look at Ohio's State Agency Districts and Program Areas (2008)".
- Organization or Author of Report**: Points to "Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission".
- URL Link**: Points to the URL "<http://www.morpc.org/pdf/OhioAgencyDistricts.pdf>".
- Location of Report**: Points to "OHIO".

The main body of the entry contains the following text:

The study explains that regions can provide real gains and make a difference. However, there is a sporadic and inconsistent recognition of regions and their roles currently in Ohio. Many state service areas were defined years ago and do not take into account existing regions resulting in difficulties in promoting regional development and causing duplication of services. State agencies were mapped for the purpose of identifying consistencies and inconsistencies between geographical boundaries. The study reports an unfortunate number of inconsistencies that include no consistency between economic development related agencies and no consistency amongst human service related service areas. The only contiguous boundaries of agencies directly involved safety.

EXAMPLE

Annotated Bibliography Entry

Annotated Bibliography of Studies and Data on Local Government Reform and Collaboration (National)

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Local Government Collaboration Incentives

Pages 3-23

This sub-committee of the Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration is charged with the identification of options for encouraging and incentivizing local government to collaborate.

Local and State Structures

Pages 24-40

This sub-committee of the Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration is charged with the identification of local tax structure changes which would encourage collaboration or improve service effectiveness.

Service Delivery Models

Pages 41-68

This sub-committee of the Ohio Commission on Local Government Reform and Collaboration is charged with the identification of current/alternative service delivery models.

Local Government Collaboration Incentives

The following is a list of reports and data relevant to the work of this committee.

KENTUCKY

Task Force on Inter-County Cooperation (2003)

Legislative Research Commission

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/lrcpubs/RR314.pdf>

The main objective of this Task Force is Inter-County Cooperation. Their purpose was to persuade counties to create interlocal agreements so that local government could cut back on their costs. It was also their duty to investigate how Kentucky could form incentives for counties that responded and formed these agreements. Examples of recommendations created: consolidate all efforts and have only one department—the Department for Local Government, involved in the review responsibilities of special district and consolidated local government interlocal agreements; have the Department for Local Government create a publication so that local government can use it for interlocal agreements; if services are better provided for by interlocal agreements, a statute must be formed in order to dissolve the functional special district.

LOUISIANA

Technical Report of the Office of State Planning Task Force (2008)

Office of State Planning for the State of Louisiana

http://lra.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/searchable/task_force/OSP/OSPFinalReport021508.pdf

The Office of State Planning Task Force was created in order to implement recommendations of the Louisiana Speaks Regional Plan in order to fashion a comprehensive Office of State Planning. This report hold an extensive list of recommendations that examine how an office of state planning should: not be given the new regulatory powers related to environmental or other reviews; relocate into the Deputy Commissioner level within DOA with the ability to hold their own responsive unit; have the power to facilitate, fund and implement local, regional and state plans.

MAINE

Four Year Growth Management Program Evaluation (2007)

Maine State Planning Office

http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/docs/legisla-ture_gov/programevaluation2007.pdf

Maine's land has been threatened by population growth and an increase in urban sprawl into undeveloped areas. Under the Growth Management Act, a four year program evaluation has been implemented in order to overhaul the state comprehensive plan review process. There are ten goals that The Growth Management Act focuses on in order to maintain and regulate how land is used. For example, the Maine State Planning Office is looking to "encourage orderly growth and development" in pockets of the community while preserving the natural qualities of the State; to uphold affordable and adequate housing for the community residence; and to protect the State's forest resources from human growth.

Facilitating Government Cooperation (2007)

Maine State Planning Office

http://www.maine.gov/spo/legandgovreports/docs/facilitating_government_cooperation.pdf

The Maine State Planning Office wrote a report to the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government. The Committee facilitates municipal and local government dynamic by aiding in their development of a process that would systematically file statutorily-required state reports—consolidating the delivery of local government services. There were three recommendations, have the State Plan Office report on their progress annually, have state agencies review administrative role in order improve efficiencies; and have the Intergovernmental Advisory Commission develop legislation for consideration by the 123rd Legislature.

Maine’s Intergovernmental Advisory Commission’s Blueprint for Government (2006)

Maine’s Intergovernmental Advisory Commission

http://www.maine.gov/iac/reports/Blueprint%20for%20Government%20_2006%20FINAL_.pdf

This Commission offers recommendations on eliminating redundancies and improving information sharing in government by standardizing communication methods. Specific recommendations have yet to be made, but will regard alternative and cost-effective ways of providing public services. The Commission places an emphasis on consolidating local services, encouraging regional entities with financial incentives, and improving training/professional standards of government officials.

Revitalizing Maine's Downtowns (2004)

The Maine Downtown Center and the Maine State Planning Office

http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/docs/legisla-ture_gov/revitalizingdowntowns2004.pdf

This report suggests various methods to revitalize Maine's downtowns, often by analyzing similar methods implemented in other states. The topics discussed in the greatest depth include eliminating barriers to downtown revitalization as well as various methods to fund incremental urban renewal efforts that are sensitive to historic, cultural, and economic needs of downtown environments.

Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Local and Regional Services (2008)

Department of Administrative and Financial Services

<http://www.maine.gov/dafs/FundReports/2008RegionalEfficiencyGrantReport.pdf>

This Fund encourages intergovernmental cooperation through state grants. Cases of study included emergency communication services, fire districts, and local government functions. These funds will improve the efficiency of regional services in order to reduce municipal and county spending as well as improve the quantity and quality of services provided.

Where Do We Grow From Here (2008)

Task Force on the Future for Growth and Development in Maryland

<http://planning.maryland.gov/PDF/Yourpart/773/773TaskForceReport.pdf>

This Task Force identifies how present land-use patterns in Maryland complicate the state's mission of protecting the Chesapeake Bay and agricultural land from the impacts transportation and other urban patterns. The Task Force makes recommendations relating to future development that encourages smart growth via improving planning, transportation, infrastructure, housing, preserving open space, and streamlining regulations. The Task Force lays out a policy based on state funded incentives rather than regulation.

Special Commission on Municipal Relief (2009)

Special Commission on Municipal Relief

http://www.mass.gov/legis/reports/municipal_relief_commission_report_may_2009.pdf

This Commission proposes recommendations intended to help municipalities weather the 2008-2009 recession. Proposals include restructuring the property tax cap in Massachusetts as well as finding other sources of government revenue, devolving the funding of certain local services from the state back to communities, and offering state funded incentives to regionalize local services. Recommendations were also made regarding reforming unfunded mandates, excessive regulation, reforming increasingly unaffordable healthcare, and expenses associated with special education.

Readiness Finance Commission Report (2008)

Readiness Financial Commission

<http://www.mass.gov/Eeoe/Readiness%20Finance%20Commission%20Final%20Report.pdf>

This Commission was created to identify sustainable means of funding education. Both incentives and mandates would encourage a restructuring of education to reduce costs and improve efficiency as well as obtaining additional sources of revenue. The Commission's suggestions include reducing the costs of healthcare and retirement benefits as well as energy costs. Regionalizing certain education related services was also discussed.

MICHIGAN

The Task Force on Local Government Services and Fiscal Stability: Final Report to the Governor (2006)

The Task Force on Local Government Services and Fiscal Stability

http://www.michigansuburbsalliance.org/downloads/municipal_finance/Governor_task_force_on_LGSFS_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

This Task Force evaluates policies hindering local governments from delivering services efficiently. Impediments include rising legacy costs to retired employees and high infrastructure costs even as government revenue is flat or declining. The Task Force recommends that state mandates and incentives encourage consolidating certain local government services and improve their cooperation to enhance the local governments' fiscal health. Specific examples include creating a Center for intergovernmental Cooperation and permitting municipalities additional means of collecting revenue.

Interim Report of the Legislative Commission on Statutory Mandates (2009)

Legislative Commission on Statutory Mandates

http://council.legislature.mi.gov/files/lcsm/LCSM_Interim_Report_June_2009.pdf

This interim report identifies “funded and unfunded mandates imposed by the State on local units of government.” The Commission finds that the 1978 Headlee amendment preventing passage of unfunded mandates has frequently been overlooked or ignored, fiscally burdening local governments. The Commission’s final report will include an estimated cost for complying with the mandates and recommended solutions to address the issue.

Summary of Potential Recommendations (2009)

Commission for Government Efficiency

http://council.legislature.mi.gov/files/lcge/summary_potential_recommendations.pdf

This Commission summary briefly outlines potential recommendations for improving government efficiency. Topics discussed are wide-ranging and include education, health plans for government employees, correctional facilities, improving intergovernmental revenue sharing, providing incentives for service sharing, reducing waste and increasing productivity within state departments, estimating the appropriate composition of the government workforce, and making government purchases in bulk.

Regional Planning in Michigan: Challenges and Opportunities of Intergovernmental Cooperation, Executive Summary (2005)

University of Michigan Center for Local, State and Urban Policy

<http://closup.umich.edu/publications/reports/pr-3-reg-gov.pdf>

This report analyzes “factors that affect the formation and ongoing operations of regional governmental planning efforts related to land use issues.” The study finds that cost savings, a spirit of collaboration, and leadership facilitate and sustain regional planning efforts. The report concludes that a state focus on economic incentives, trust among local policymakers, and meaningful participation of the business community all facilitate regional planning efforts.

**Intergovernmental Cooperation in Michigan:
A Policy Conference Final Report (2007)**

Michigan State University Extension

[http://council.legislature.mi.gov/files/lcsm/
LCSM_Interim_Report_June_2009.pdf](http://council.legislature.mi.gov/files/lcsm/LCSM_Interim_Report_June_2009.pdf)

This summary of a dialogue focused on policy options related to intergovernmental cooperation. Many of the topics discussed were nuanced by Michigan's challenging economic climate. Issues discussed at the conference included consolidation of local jurisdictions, revising boundary laws, removing legal barriers to intergovernmental cooperation, state involvement with special districts, economic development on a regional scale, and revenue sharing.

**School District Consolidation, Size and Spending:
An Evaluation (2007)**

Mackinac Center for Public Policy

[http://www.mackinac.org/archives/2007/s2007-
06.pdf](http://www.mackinac.org/archives/2007/s2007-06.pdf)

The Mackinac Center lays out a report that challenges the assertion that consolidating school districts will improve efficiency. Instead the Center concludes that the optimal school district size is 2,900 students, and that breaking up larger districts could in fact improve efficiency more than consolidation. The Center also advocates restructuring incentives in the education system so that districts are financially rewarded for controlling costs and improving quality, as well as increasing parental choice and competition in schooling.

**School District and Municipal
Reorganization: Research Findings & Policy
Proposals (2007)**

Michigan Senate, Local, Urban and State Affairs
Committee

[http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/modules.php?na
me=Documents&op=viewlive&sp_id=306](http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/modules.php?name=Documents&op=viewlive&sp_id=306)

This report documents "the current state of thinking on municipal and school district reorganization" over the past thirty years and concludes with policies relating to each topic discussed. Among the policies discussed in the document: police services, fire services, roads, solid waste and water, and property tax assessments. The Committee discussed incentives to encourage intergovernmental cooperation as well as policy proposals for municipal consolidation.

Approaches to Consolidating Local Government Services (2008)

Citizens Research Council of Michigan

<http://crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2008/rpt354.pdf>

This report analyzes the different benefits of collaboration when the service provided is either capital intensive, skill intensive, or labor intensive. Various approaches to collaboration are discussed, as are incentives provided by counties and the state to help smaller municipalities finance start-up costs and consolidate services.

Choices in Regional Governance Structures: Special Districts as Collaboration Mechanisms (2009)

Wayne State University Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation

http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=interlocal_coop

This report analyzes under which circumstances local organizations can voluntarily collaborate on regional needs such as library, hospital, and fire services. It also considers when a state regulated form of collaboration is more effective at delivering local services. The report discusses benefits of efficiency gained from voluntary cooperation as well as its limitations.

MISSISSIPPI

Report of the Task Force on Local Government Information Systems (2003)

Task Force on Local Government Information Systems

<http://www.mssc.state.ms.us/commissions-forcescommittees/its2les.pdf>

This Task Force analyzes and makes recommendations about improving the quality, uniformity, and efficiency of information systems in Mississippi. Technicalities concerning hardware and software needs; standardizing diverse practices currently used; and sources of funding are discussed. The Task Force also encourages collaboration between and among state and local governments to implement these recommendations to reduce redundancies and improve efficiency.

NEW JERSEY

Overview of the Literature Review and Analysis on Five Subjects Related to the Cost-Efficiency of Municipal Government (2009)

Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization and Consolidation Commission

http://www.nj.gov/dca/affiliates/luarcc/pdf/final_overview_report.pdf

The purpose of this Commission was to gather information on possible efficiencies gained through the realignment of local units and service sharing. Findings of the Commission included that consolidation does not necessarily increase efficiency; that there are economies and diseconomies of scale associated with consolidation; both regionalization and privatization improve efficiency in certain applications; and that hybrid delivery arrangements can reduce potential loss of local control in a newly consolidated government.

Sharing Available Resources Efficiently: Best Practices Handbook (2006)

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

http://www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/share/share_handbook.pdf

This “handbook” helps guide local officials’ decision making on issues of shared public services. Among the guidance the document offers are issues such as finding opportunities for service sharing; sharing with different kinds of local government entities; and obtaining grants. The handbook provides diverse examples that include animal control services, records management, and municipal courts.

The LUARCC: A Law to Suggest and Encourage Local Government Consolidations (2007)

New Jersey State League of Municipalities

http://www.njslom.org/mag1107_article_pg110.html

This article details the rationale for the law creating what became the Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization, and Consolidation Commission. In it, the Commission’s purpose and areas of focus are explained in detail. This Commission was based upon a previous commission that was considered successful because its recommendations could be approved only in their entirety; however any recommendations made would not necessarily be mandatory.

Special Session Joint Legislative Commission

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/PropertyTaxSession/JCGO_Report111506.pdf

The Commission reviews and offered proposals relating to “the sharing of services and regionalization of functions at all levels of government.” The Commission finds that the numerous overlapping local government entities create a system of inefficiency and redundancy. Among the eighteen recommendations: streamlining regulation to encourage collaboration, creating a local commission to facilitate mergers, and standardizing assessments.

NEW YORK

State and Local Governments Partnering for a Better New York (2001)

Quality Communities Interagency Task Force

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/scandoclinks/ocm46867192.htm>

This report discusses the benefits and impacts of downtown revitalization, environmental protections, sustainable development, and economic development. Forty-one recommendations are provided relating to collaboration between state and local government and between agencies; reinvesting in downtowns; preserving agricultural and open space; providing state assistance to coordinate intergovernmental collaboration; transportation planning and maintenance; and promoting economic development.

Intermunicipal Cooperation and Consolidation: Exploring Opportunities for Savings and Improved Service Delivery

Office of the New York State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/pubs/research/cooperation1.pdf>

This report offers recommendations of how the 2,300 school districts and municipalities in New York State can offer public services more efficiently and effectively. The contents of the report focus on reviewing collaborative policies and implementations inside and outside the state. Fiscally responsible strategies are also discussed, as are important issues that officials might face when pursuing cooperative ventures.

Cost-Saving and Cost-Containment Strategies for New York State's Local Governments

Office of the New York State Comptroller,
Division of Local Government and School
Accountability

<https://osc.state.ny.us/localgov/pubs/research/costsavingcontainment.pdf>

This research brief explores diverse cost-saving strategies that the state and local governments can follow in order to control rising costs. These cost-saving strategies are organized into issues of energy, healthcare, correctional facilities, and controlling personnel costs.

NORTH CAROLINA

21st Century Transportation Committee Final Report (2009)

General Assembly of North Carolina

<http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/21stCenturyTransportation/Final%20Report/Final%20Report.pdf>

This final report discusses ways to fund and improve transportation in the state, from bicycling to air travel, to facilitate economic vitality. There is also discussion of how to divide the responsibilities of transportation funding and operations among the state and local governments, and how to coordinate their transportation planning. Tolls, vehicle fees based on weight, and intermodal transportation are among the policy options discussed.

Improving Regional Economic Development through Structural Changes and Performance Measurement Incentives (2008)

Legislative Services Office of the North Carolina
General Assembly

http://www.ncleg.net/PED/Reports/documents/RED/Reg_Econ_Dev_Report.pdf

The purpose of this report is to “evaluate the structure and funding” of seven regional economic development organizations that facilitate business investment in the state. The organizations are not structured identically, and there is discussion of how to standardize their regulations. Recommendations are concerned with how to most effectively organize and fund these regional entities, and how to make the organizations accountable for their results.

Interlocal Cooperation, Regional Organizations, and City-County Consolidation (2007)

County and Municipal Government in North Carolina

<http://www.sog.unc.edu/pubs/cmgl/cmgl10.pdf>

This brief document gives an overview of the benefits of local and regional cooperation and as well common techniques to implement it such as contributions, service contracts, and joint agreements. There is also an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of city-county consolidation.

Commission on Smart Growth, Growth Management and Development: Findings and Recommendations (2001)

Commission on Smart Growth, Growth Management and Development

[http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/smartgrowth/Findings%20and%20Recommendations%20\(Fall%202001\).pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/smartgrowth/Findings%20and%20Recommendations%20(Fall%202001).pdf)

This Commission produced a comprehensive report on sustainable means to manage rapid population growth in the North Carolina. They recommend that “smart growth” policies be implemented to address the issue, and that these policies rely less on mandates and more on incentives. The Commission called for a regional approach to transportation and open space planning. It also recommended that local governments play a primary role in implementing these policies, and that there should be more cooperation between the state and cities.

OKLAHOMA

Report of the Task Force on School District Administrative Efficiency (2009)

Task Force on School District Administrative Efficiency

http://www.oksenate.gov/publications/issue_papers/education/school_dist_admin_tf_report.pdf

This Task Force investigated possible means of improving efficiency of school districts through reorganization and consolidation. They recommended service sharing, consolidation, as well as non-administrative cost saving techniques. The Task Force also recommended monitoring district achievement and recognizing successful practices.

OREGON

Oregon Task Force on Land Use Planning – Final Report to the 2009 Oregon Legislature (2009)

Oregon Task Force on Land Use Planning

http://egov.oregon.gov/LCD/docs/budget/wm2009/b4-Big_Look_Report.pdf

The purpose of this Task Force was to review Oregon's land use policies to determine how it is meeting the needs of Oregonians. The Task Force concluded the current land use system is too much of a "one size fits all" and should be more flexible. It was also recommended that current land use policies be simplified and incorporate more citizen participation. The report highlights the role of the state, which can coordinate planning and economic development as well as foster local collaboration.

State Interim Task Force on Library Cooperation – Final Report (2002)

Senate Interim Task Force on Library Cooperation

http://msl.state.mt.us/About_MSL/fulfillment_task_force/archive/2008/01/20080125orlibcoop.pdf

The Task Force investigated ways for libraries to improve efficiency and services and offer equitable library services to all Oregonians through cooperation. The Task Force recommends eliminating or creating various programs, often utilizing state grants and other assistance.

PENNSYLVANIA

DCNR White Paper on Counties, Cities, and Towns (2003)

Counties, Cities and Towns Writing Team

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/info/shapefuture/02-cct.pdf>

The DCNR's white paper provides an overview of suburbanization and population trends in Pennsylvania, discussing the economic, environmental, and social benefits of denser, planned growth and revitalizing cities and towns. The organization supports smart growth policies and a regional approach to land use planning; advocates the use of incentives; and supports keeping the public better informed about smart growth policies. The organization states that these positions can facilitate growth in cities and towns.

Review of the Effectiveness of the Civil Service System in County Government

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee (2004)

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2004/251.PDF>

This study carried out by the Hay Group investigates the civil service system employment practices in county government. Issues considered include but are not limited to recruitment, retention, promotion, and personnel management. The firm recommended an interagency policy-setting group, reassessing the priority given to veterans, and recalibrating hiring criteria for employees. As a last resort, a county can amend or terminate its contract with the State Civil Service Commission.

Report to the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (2004)

Senate Resolution 60 Commission (Improving Emergency Services Delivery)

http://www.swarthmorepa.org/government/documents/senatereport60_000.pdf

This Commission recommended how to improve the effectiveness of emergency service delivery via financial incentives and legislation. Recommendations concentrated on funding, recruitment and retention, possible legislation, and alternative service delivery models.

The Feasibility of Regionalizing Pennsylvania's Volunteer Fire Companies (2005)

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2005/250.PDF>

The report from this Committee considers the benefits of regionalizing volunteer fire companies. Pennsylvania's unrivaled number of fire companies results in an inefficient duplicity of resources. Alternative forms of consolidation and service sharing as well as incentives to encourage such behavior are discussed.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook, 6th Edition (2006)

Governor's Center for Local Government Services

<http://www.newpa.com/get-local-gov-support/publications/download.aspx?id=382>

This “handbook” provides an encyclopedic overview issues related to intergovernmental cooperation and methods used to address and them. The publication discusses alternative funding structures, alternative cooperation programs such as joint authority methods and cooperative planning, and examples of cooperation for specific public services.

A Study of the Cost Effectiveness of Consolidating Pennsylvania School Districts: Part 1 of 2 Statewide Analysis, Prepared for the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

Standard and Poor's School Evaluation Services(2007)

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2007/289.PDF>

The firm Standard and Poor's analyzed whether consolidation and/or service sharing could improve the cost effectiveness, quality, and availability of services in smaller school districts. The firm observed a general trend in which costs fell for districts as the student population approached 3,000, but featured increasing costs past this threshold. The study also investigates the effects of consolidation or service sharing on school transportation and other logistical issues.

Common Cents Shared Services Initiative: Pilot School District Report District: Jefferson-Morgan (2008)

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/newsroom/lib/newsroom/Jefferson-Morgan_PDE_Common_Cents_Pilot_Report_08252008_Final.pdf

This report uses the Jefferson-Morgan school district for a pilot study to identify opportunities in sharing services to reduce costs. Areas of focus included transportation, food services, instruction, purchasing, facilities, and technology. The Common Cents Team offers recommendations to facilitate shared services in each of these areas.

Creating a Sustainable Solution for Pennsylvania: Governor's Sustainable Infrastructure Task Force Report (2008)

Governor's Sustainable Infrastructure Task Force

<http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/watersupply/lib/watersupply/municipalfinance/taskforce/3800-bk-dep4208.pdf>

The purpose of this task force was to assess the state's water infrastructure needs as well as alternative methods for funding and for improving management efficiency. The Task Force recommended increasing efficiency using improved methods, regionalization, and sharing services. Additionally, it was recommended that the cost to consumers increase to reflect the true cost of water and sewer services, and supported seeking additional state and federal funds.

Tax Exempt Property and Municipal Fiscal Status (2009)

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2009/26.PDF>

The report discusses the impact of tax exempt property on municipalities' fiscal health. Conclusions are that most such property is owned by universities, hospitals, and government organizations. These property owners often provide voluntary payment, though not enough to compensate their home municipalities. Proposals include mandating that such organizations pay compensatory non-tax payments or service fees, and using state funds to reimburse communities for the tax exempt property.

Final Report of the PPA MPC Task Force to PPA Legislative Committee (2002)

PPA Legislative Committee

http://www.planningpa.org/mpc_finalreport04.pdf

This Committee critiques the Municipal Planning Code, revising it to facilitate legislation consistent with current planning principles. Recommendations include creating a state planning board and planning office, and to continually revise the MPC. The Committee also recommends education for planners and members of the public and government, and training/credentialing for planners.

Committing to Prosperity, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institute (2007)

The Brookings Institute

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2007/03pennsylvania_metro/committingtoprosperity.pdf

This report is an update to a similar 2003 Bookings' report on how to rekindle Pennsylvania's economy using planning principles and through revitalizing the commonwealth's cities. Numerous recommendations concerning intergovernment collaboration; reform of employee pensions and other expenses; planning; and economic initiatives are detailed in the report.

Restoring Prosperity: The State Role In Revitalizing America's Older Industrial Cities (2007)

The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2007/05metropolitanpolicy_vey/20070520_oic.pdf

This report discusses the economic challenges facing industrial cities in the Midwest and Northeast. Brookings concludes that these cities are capable of a comeback, assisted by the state. Numerous recommendations include "fixing basics" such as schools and crime; investing in information-based employment; creating a business friendly environment; and metropolitan wide approaches to collaboration and service sharing.

Report of the Task Force on Funding for World Class Learning

South Carolina Department of Education

<http://www.scstatehouse.gov/citizensinterest-page/JointEducationFundingStudyComm/EquityFundingTaskForceReport.pdf>

This Task Force was charged with analyzing education funding in the state to enable the state to better educate the population. Among the recommendations to that end: incentivizing education personnel to work in fiscally stressed districts; funding districts based on student population needs; expanded school choice options; and voluntary district consolidation.

TENNESSEE

Emergency Challenge: A Study of E911 Technology and Funding Structure in Tennessee (2004)

The Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR)

http://www.tennessee.gov/tacir/PDF_FILES/Other_Issues/E911%20funding.pdf

The Commission was directed to study funding and technological methods used by emergency 9-1-1 services in the state. Although Tennessee's E-911 services are among the best in the country, the Commission recommended improving them with minimum equipment standards, voluntary centralized purchasing capabilities, and studying the benefits of new technologies. Such new technologies may require mandates to speed their implementation.

Forming a Metropolitan Government: The How's and Why's of Local Government Consolidation in Tennessee (2003)

The Tennessee Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations (TACIR)

http://www.tennessee.gov/tacir/PDF_FILES/Growth_Policy/metrogovt.pdf

The purpose of this staff information report is to educate Tennesseans about consolidation, metropolitan government, and relevant state laws. Benefits such as economies of scale and eliminating duplicities are discussed. There is also a discussion of steps to be taken by local government as it initiates consolidation, including considering legislative bodies, judicial processes, and education and emergency services.

VIRGINIA

Report on the Study of Consolidation of Local Departments of Social Services (2003)

The Virginia Department of Social Services

[http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/By+Year/HD402003/\\$file/HD40.PDF](http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/By+Year/HD402003/$file/HD40.PDF)

This report discusses possible methods for incentivizing and implementing consolidation of local social service departments. Voluntary instead of mandatory consolidation was recommended, as were removing bureaucratic barriers; implementing various specific incentives and funds for one time capital investments and legal expenses; and creating support teams to provide technical assistance during consolidation.

Final Report of the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations on the Condition and Future of Virginia's Cities (2003)

The Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations

http://www.virginiaplaces.org/vacities/final_report.on.condition&future.pdf

This Commission discussed means to “alleviate the growing social and economic problems confronting Virginia’s urban localities” and found that collaboration was critical to improving their condition. Among the recommendations: articulate goals for communities and the state; adopt a comprehensive policy to promote regional and community vitality; incentives for collaboration and sharing; and a state orientation toward regionalism.

Virginia's Government Structure (2001)

Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service: The Virginia News Letter

<http://www.coopercenter.org/publications/site-files/vanl/vanl1201.pdf>

This is an adaption of a keynote address by former Governor Gerald L. Baliles that addresses the asymmetry in governance between counties and municipalities. He recommended three proposals to address these issues: to clearly define the role of local governments, to consolidate certain local government functions, and to reorganize legislative districts that respect communities of interest to give these communities a clear voice in state government.

Final Report of the Joint Subcommittee Studying The Use of Incentives for Joint Activities by Localities (1997)

Joint Subcommittee

[http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/fc86c2b17a1cf388852570f9006f1299/617b021e77e6906b85256482004658ac/\\$FILE/SD26_1997.pdf](http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/fc86c2b17a1cf388852570f9006f1299/617b021e77e6906b85256482004658ac/$FILE/SD26_1997.pdf)

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WISCONSIN

Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority (2009)

Special Committee on Regional Transportation Authority

http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/publications/rl/RL_09_08_rta.pdf

This Special Committee recommended legislation that would create Regional Transit Authorities (RTA) to provide transportation within communities. The legislation stipulates under which circumstances an RTA can be created or dissolved, and indicates that it could be funded by a sales tax within the jurisdictional area.

Wisconsin Local Land Use Regulations and Comprehensive Planning Status Report (2008)

Wisconsin Department of Administration (DOA), Division of Intergovernmental Relations

ftp://ftp.wi.gov/DOA/public/comprehensive-plans/2008_Report/June_2008_LURegs_CPStatus_Report_FINAL.pdf

This status report provides an update on a 1999 law that mandated that all local governments engaging in zoning have a comprehensive plan. It also discusses a Comprehensive Planning Grant program that offers incentives to local governments to coordinate development of these plans with other jurisdictions.

Special Committee on Municipal Annexation (2007)

Special Committee on Municipal Annexation

http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/publications/rl/rl_2007_10.pdf

This document describes a bill that was reintroduced in 2007 based on recommendations from the Special Committee on Municipal Annexation. The Committee recommended that regulations be modified to enable local cooperative plans for boundary agreements and to resolve disputes. Other topics discussed are incentives to engage in mediation, the impact of annexation on property values, and how effectively public services can be provided after annexation.

State of Wisconsin Task Force on State and Local Government (2003)

Governor's Task Force on State and Local Government

<http://www.localgovinstitute.org/Reports/2003%20Sheehy%20Commission%20Report.pdf>

The Task Force found that Wisconsin's local governments exert more energy competing against one another than productively working with each other to attract new business, prompting the Task Force to suggest new policies that will encourage cooperation. Recommendations are provided relating to regional revenue sharing; modernizing Tax Incremental Finance; linking shared revenue to the percentage of state budget growth; shared revenue equity; and using shared revenue to reward service sharing.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

Guide to Successful Local Government Collaboration in America's Regions (2006)

NLC's City Futures Program

<http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/2381EA924E114002BF56C2E03F4AC5D8/GovtGovtCollabor.pdf>

This in-depth guide was created by the National League of Cities for local government employees to "better understand new opportunities for improving service delivery . . . through local government cooperation". The NLC described at length 17 types of collaboration, ranging from joint power agreements and councils of governments to local special districts and merger/consolidation. These examples are categorized into either "easier" or "harder" options.

Local and State Tax Structures

The following is a list of reports and data relevant to the work of this committee.

IOWA

Property Taxation Review Committee Final Report (2005)

Property Taxation Review Committee

http://www.legis.state.ia.us/lsadocs/Docs_Filed/2005/DFJYD041.PDF

This report evaluates which system of taxation will be optimal for local governments. The Committee looked at how revenue sources were divided amongst the local/state governments and how the local taxpayer will be affected. They also focused on matters pertaining to reductions in local taxes, the role of the property tax, and a variety of different property taxation systems

Utility Tax Replacement Task Force Report to the Iowa Legislative Council (2001)

Iowa Utility Tax Replacement Task Force Report

<http://www.iowa.gov/tax/locgov/L111599.doc>

The General Assembly passed the 2416 Utilities bill—a bill that replaces property taxes paid by electric and natural gas utilities with excise taxes associated with electricity and natural gas. The bill requires that the Iowa Utility Tax Replacement Task Force keep track and make any modifications if need be, depending on the impact of the replacement tax on local taxing districts, consumers and taxpayers. Recommendations that have been instituted cover uncertainties on which tax encapsulated the transportation of natural gas through gas pipes and the structure of the appeal process made by the Department of Revenue and Finance for a replacement tax/statewide property tax taxpayer.

KENTUCKY

Final Report of the Task Force on Local Taxation, House Bill 272 (2006)

Legislative Research Commission

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/lrcpubs/RM500.pdf>

The Task Force on Local Taxation was designed to observe and improve Kentucky's local tax. This bill was meant to improve and create a more efficient tax system, remove special tax districts, and create a financial database service for local governments. Recommendations range from: a proposed constitutional amendment, which could establish a more capable and flexible local government tax structure; the elimination of special taxing districts, which would increase efficiency of the budget process by having special taxing districts submitting their budgets and tax rate to fiscal courts in a timely approach; and on city/county tax base issues, which supports the development of incentives for local government which would promote revenue sharing and remove conflicting relationship with tax credits.

Report of the Task Force on Local Government Taxing Structures (1997)

Task Force on Local Government Taxing Structures

<http://www.lrc.ky.gov/lrcpubs/rm479.pdf>

The Task Force on Local Government Taxing Structures was developed in order to undertake a more secure tax base that will be able to cater and provide for the needs of Commonwealth in counties around the state. Recommendations ranged from integrating elasticity into the taxing methods for local governments, a database with a standard report format for the local government, an increase in financial support allocated to road funds, and to advocate the review of both state and local tax reform all at once.

MAINE

Revitalizing Maine's Downtowns (2004)

The Maine Downtown Center and the Maine State Planning Office

http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/docs/legislature_gov/revitalizingdowntowns2004.pdf

This report suggests various methods to revitalize Maine's downtowns, often by analyzing similar methods implemented in other states. The topics discussed in the greatest depth include eliminating barriers to downtown revitalization as well as various methods to fund incremental urban renewal efforts that are sensitive to historic, cultural, and economic needs of downtown environments.

Reviving Service Centers: Report of the Task Force on Service Center Communities (1998)

Maine State Planning Office

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/docs/tehasist/revivingservicecenters.pdf>

This Task Force recommends ways to revive the local economies of service center communities (i.e. communities that are employment centers of regional importance) and end the middle-class flight out of Maine's larger towns and cities. The report discusses how recommendations would be implemented using state and federal funds and through changes in tax policy. These recommendations are expected to not only improve the economic conditions in the service center communities, but also the surrounding areas that use their services.

MARYLAND

Where Do We Grow From Here (2008)

Task Force on the Future for Growth and Development in Maryland

<http://planning.maryland.gov/PDF/Yourpart/773/773TaskForceReport.pdf>

This Task Force identifies how present land-use patterns in Maryland complicate the state's mission of protecting the Chesapeake Bay and agricultural land from the impacts of transportation and other urban patterns. The Task Force makes recommendations relating to future development that encourages smart growth via improving planning, transportation, infrastructure, housing, preserving open space, and streamlining regulations. The Task Force lays out a policy based on state funded incentives rather than regulation.

MASSACHUSETTS

Special Commission on Municipal Relief (2009)

Special Commission on Municipal Relief

http://www.mass.gov/legis/reports/municipal_relief_commission_report_may_2009.pdf

This Commission proposes recommendations intended to help municipalities weather the 2008-2009 recession. Proposals include restructuring the property tax cap in Massachusetts as well as finding other sources government revenue, devolving the funding of certain local services from the state back to communities, and offering state funded incentives to regionalize local services. Recommendations were also made regarding reforming unfunded mandates, excessive regulation, reforming increasingly unaffordable healthcare, and expenses associated with special education.

Readiness Finance Commission Report (2008)

Readiness Financial Commission

<http://www.mass.gov/Eeoe/Readiness%20Finance%20Commission%20Final%20Report.pdf>

This Commission was created to identify sustainable means of funding education. Both incentives and mandates would encourage a restructuring of education to reduce costs and improve efficiency as well as obtaining additional sources of revenue. The Commission's suggestions include reducing the costs of healthcare and retirement benefits as well as energy costs. Regionalizing certain education related services was also discussed.

Local Communities at Risk: Revisiting the Fiscal Partnership between the Commonwealth and Cities and Towns (2005)

Municipal Finance Task Force

<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/rappaport/downloads/metromayors/report.pdf>

This Task Force provides an overview of municipalities enduring a difficult budget climate after the 2001 recession. It proceeds to make recommendations about how local governments can provide quality services while controlling costs and collecting revenue in a consistent and predictable manner. The Task Force also recommends that state aid to the municipalities more consistent, and that the state can fund regional agreements to encourage more efficient government.

MICHIGAN

Michigan's Local Government Records are in Danger (2006)

Michigan Local Government Records Task Force

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/hal_mhc_rms_localtf_whitepaper_149325_7.pdf

This Task Force provides an overview of the poor storage conditions of local government records and makes recommendations to ensure their safe storage. The Task Force offers solutions such as comprehensive Retention and Disposal Schedules, improved storage facilities, and education programs about how to best preserve records. The Task Force also suggests that state grants and filing fees be used as sources of revenue, and that local governments pay a service fee to the state for any assistance received.

The Task Force on Local Government Services and Fiscal Stability: Final Report to the Governor (2006)

The Task Force on Local Government Services and Fiscal Stability

http://www.michigansuburbsalliance.org/downloads/municipal_finance/Governor_task_force_on_LGSFS_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

This Task Force evaluates policies hindering local governments from delivering services efficiently. Impediments include rising legacy costs to retired employees and high infrastructure costs even as government revenue is flat or declining. The Task Force recommends that state mandates and incentives encourage consolidating certain local government services and improve their cooperation to enhance the local governments' fiscal health. Specific examples include creating a center for intergovernmental cooperation and permitting municipalities additional means of collecting revenue.

Interim Report of the Legislative Commission on Statutory Mandates (2009)

Legislative Commission on Statutory Mandates

http://council.legislature.mi.gov/files/lcsm/LCSM_Interim_Report_June_2009.pdf

This interim report identifies “funded and unfunded mandates imposed by the State on local units of government.” The Commission finds that the 1978 Headlee amendment preventing passage of unfunded mandates has frequently been overlooked or ignored, fiscally burdening local governments. The Commission’s final report will include an estimated cost for complying with the mandates and recommended solutions to address the issue.

Summary of Potential Recommendations (2009)

Commission for Government Efficiency

http://council.legislature.mi.gov/files/lcge/summary_potential_recommendations.pdf

This Commission summary briefly outlines potential recommendations for improving government efficiency. Topics discussed are wide-ranging and include education, health plans for government employees, correctional facilities, improving intergovernmental revenue sharing and providing incentives for service sharing, reducing waste and increasing productivity within state departments, estimating the appropriate composition of the government workforce, and making government purchases in bulk.

Financing Joint Public Ventures: Alternatives and Consequences (2003)

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)

<http://library.semco.org/InmagicGenie/DocumentFolder/FinancingJPS.pdf>

SEMCOG encourages intergovernmental cooperation to most effectively provide services in all economic climates. The Council argues in favor of the economic benefits of regionalizing certain services instead of privatization, but also analyzes the appropriateness of joint private/public ventures in certain situations. The Council also discusses how joint public ventures work in practice and how they can best be funded.

Authorization for Interlocal Agreements and Intergovernmental Cooperation in Michigan (2007)

Citizens Research Council of Michigan

<http://www.baycounty-mi.gov/Docs/Executive/Reports/Interlocal%20Agreements%20IGC.pdf>

This Council discusses the legal framework in Michigan with respect to intergovernmental cooperation. The Council analyzes how these laws relate to planning, economic development, numerous kinds infrastructure, administrative tasks, libraries, education, and public safety. In all, 77 provisions of Michigan state law are summarized.

**Time Running out for Shared Revenue.
Michigan Suburbs Alliance (2007)**

Michigan Suburbs Alliance

http://www.michigansuburbsalliance.org/downloads/IntheRing_Q107_FINAL.pdf

This organization identifies problems associated with the revenue sharing of state funds to local governments. The funds to local governments are often not fully funded, and are not sustainable due to local government costs rising faster than the source of shared revenue (primarily the sales tax). The organization looks to other states for examples of regional or state pooling of funds and redistributing them according to a point-system based on property values and regional disparities.

**Michigan's Defining Moment: Government
Collaboration and Accountability (2009)**

The Center for Michigan

<http://www.thecenterformichigan.net/blog/2009/05/page/2/>

This report summarizes citizen input both from meetings and from online participants on how to best improve the economy and governance in the state. The campaign endorsed three principles to achieve this, including a talented and competitive workforce; a vibrant economy and quality of life; as well as accountable, efficient government. Intergovernmental collaboration and tax reform are among the actions discussed in the report to help achieve these principles.

**Reforming the Process for Identifying and
Funding Section 29 Mandates on Local Gov-
ernment (2009)**

Citizens Research Council of Michigan

<http://crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2009/rpt355.pdf>

This Council analyzes how to address the issue of unfunded mandates that were imposed on local governments despite the prohibition of such mandates in the Michigan state constitution. The Council discusses the shortcomings of the current system under which mandates are imposed, and continues by detailing practices in other states that do fund mandates and how Michigan can emulate their success.

Confronting Fiscal Stress in Municipal Governments: Support by Michigan Residents for Eight Common Strategies (2008)

Wayne State University Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation

http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=interlocal_coop

This report puts forth possible solutions to help alleviate the challenging fiscal climate that characterizes many Michigan municipalities. Remedies featured in the report fall under reducing costs through regional collaboration, as well as obtaining additional sources of revenue through new taxes or state and federal aid. Included is a survey conducted to determine how much the public supported several of these local programs and solutions.

MINNESOTA

Final Report of the Municipal Boundary Adjustment Advisory Task Force (2009)

The Municipal Boundary Adjustment Advisory Task Force

<http://www.mba.state.mn.us/MBA%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report%20-%20Feb%202009.pdf>

This Task Force recommends changes for Municipal Boundary Adjustments relating to residential development. Issues that warrant review include density and infrastructure services; issues of annexation; an equitable tax base in which cities do not subsidize townships' services; and planning. Multiple key issues are without recommendations due to an inability to achieve a consensus within the Task Force. Task Force members aligned themselves generally with a "township position" or a "city position"; their perspectives are discussed at length.

Renew the Partnership: A Principled Approach to Financing City Government (2005)

The League of Minnesota Cities: Financial Local Government Task Force

<http://www.lmc.org/media/document/1/flgrepor-trenewthepartnership.pdf>

This Task Force concludes that Minnesota's current system of distributing state funds to cities based on need and ability to raise revenue is not serving Minnesotans effectively. The recommendations made relate to: certainty of the availability of state revenue; accountability; adequate funds to meet city needs; more flexible sources of revenue; and equitable distribution of taxation and public services.

Public Safety Answering Point Consolidation (2004)

Department of Public Safety

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/3857436/Department-of-Public-Safety-Public-Safety-Answering-Point-Consolidation-February>

This Commission discusses the state of Public Safety Answering Point operations in Minnesota, and recommends policies concerning consolidating these operations. When doing so, factors such as cost-benefit analysis, impacts on public safety, best practice models, and possible incentives for consolidation are considered.

MISSOURI

Property Tax Taskforce Report (2008)

Task Force on Property Tax

<http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills073/commit/Property%20Taskforce%20Report%20Jan%202008.pdf>

This Task Force makes recommendations concerning how property taxes can be restructured to make them more equitable and to keep property tax rates from rising too quickly. Specific recommendations include limiting spending increases in districts at or near the rate of inflation, reviewing economic development incentives, standardizing assessment rates among different land uses, and finding alternative methods to finance schools that are less reliant on property taxes.

NEVADA

Incorporation of Towns (2003)

Legislative Commission's Study to Develop and Recommend Proposed Enabling Legislation For the Creation of an Incorporated Town

<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/03InterimReports/Bulletin03-03.pdf>

This Commission studied alternative means to incorporate or in select cases unincorporate towns. Traditionally, the decision of incorporating a community has been based solely on population, however the Commission proposed also considering assessed valuation for taxation purposes, possible competition with other municipalities, and other criteria. Support for alternative means of incorporation came from municipalities and was generally opposed by county governments. The Commission did not adopt any recommendations.

NEW JERSEY

State of New Jersey Property Tax Convention Task Force (2004)

Property Tax Convention Task Force to the Governor and Legislature

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/legislativepub/reports/Property_Tax_Convention_Task_Force.pdf

This Task Force offers recommendations about how best to provide property tax relief in New Jersey and how to overcome any legal challenges associated with changing the tax code. Specifically, the Task Forces focuses on eliminating inequities in taxation as they relate to lower income households, greater uniformity in their application, and alternative means to fund public services.

Constitutional Reform and Citizens Property Tax Constitutional Convention Final Report (2006)

Special Session Joint Legislative Commission

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/PropertyTaxSession/JCCR_Report111506.pdf

This Committee offered proposals “to address property tax reform through the State Constitution.” The Committee finds that this primary source of state and local revenue has grown inequitable and creates a fiscal burden for property owners. A total of 11 recommendations are offered, most of which relate to capping or reducing the amount of property tax paid by homeowners as well as other considerations of an optimal property tax structure.

Public School Funding Reform (2006)

Special Session Joint Legislative Commission

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/PropertyTaxSession/JCSF_Report111506.pdf

This Committee offered proposals concerning how the government can best provide for “the maintenance and support of a system of free public schools.” The report provides an overview of the funding and spending patterns of public education in the state. The 28 recommendations focus on: a formula to fund districts based on need; improve accountability and monitoring of services provided; appropriate resources for special education; and budget controls.

Special Session Joint Legislative Commission

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/PropertyTaxSession/JCGO_Report111506.pdf

The Commission reviews and offered proposals relating to “the sharing of services and regionalization of functions at all levels of government.” The Commission finds that the numerous overlapping local government entities create a system of inefficiency and redundancy. Among the eighteen recommendations: streamlining regulation to encourage collaboration, creating a local commission to facilitate mergers, and standardizing assessments.

NEW YORK

New York State Commission on Property Tax Relief (2008)

New York State Commission on Property Tax Relief

<http://www.cptr.state.ny.us/>

This Commission was formed to investigate the causes for New York State’s high property taxes and provides recommendations to address the issue. The Commission attributed high property taxes to exceptionally high education spending per student; costly mandates; and too many school districts. Recommendations included a property tax cap; reevaluating costly state mandates and laws; and tax relief for individuals based on their ability to pay.

State and Local Governments Partnering for a Better New York (2001)

Quality Communities Interagency Task Force

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/scandoclinks/ocm46867192.htm>

This report discusses the benefits and impacts of downtown revitalization, environmental protections, sustainable development, and economic development. Forty-one recommendations are provided relating to collaboration between state and local government and between agencies; reinvesting in downtowns; preserving agricultural and open space; providing state assistance to coordinate intergovernmental collaboration; transportation planning and maintenance; and promoting economic development.

NORTH CAROLINA

Policy Proposals for Consideration – Joint Legislative Commission on Municipal Annexation (2009)

Joint Legislative Commission on Municipal Annexation

http://www.stopncannexation.com/Joint_Commission_Recomendations.pdf

This brief document offers proposals for assessing the fiscal feasibility of annexation. The Commission discusses how to finance infrastructure investments in a newly annexed area and how to revise the area's land-use policies for a more urban environment. The Commission also discusses tax-related issues in the newly annexed area.

OREGON

Task Force on Comprehensive Revenue Restructuring – Final Report (2009)

Task Force on Comprehensive Revenue Restructuring

http://www.leg.state.or.us/comm/lro/task_force_exhibits.htm

The purpose of this report is to establish a blueprint for a “local government tax system that provides stable revenue [and] creates positive economic benefits for the state.” A key issue is that Oregon's revenue is dominated by the “volatile” income tax. The Task Force offers short and long term solutions concerned with making state and local government revenue more stable and flexible while budgeting in such a way that encourages greater cost control.

PENNSYLVANIA

Report to the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (2004)

Senate Resolution 60 Commission (Improving Emergency Services Delivery)

http://www.swarthmorepa.org/government/documents/senatereport60_000.pdf

This Commission recommends how to improve the effectiveness of emergency service delivery via financial incentives and legislation. Recommendations concentrated on funding, recruitment and retention, possible legislation, and alternative service delivery models.

**Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook,
6th Edition (2006)**

Governor's Center for Local Government Services

<http://www.newpa.com/get-local-gov-support/publications/download.aspx?id=382>

This “handbook” provides an encyclopedic overview of local government cooperation by detailing issues related to intergovernmental cooperation and methods used to address them. The publication discusses alternative funding structures, alternative cooperation programs such as joint authority methods and cooperative planning, and examples of cooperation for specific public services.

Tax Exempt Property and Municipal Fiscal Status (2009)

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2009/26.PDF>

The report discusses the impact of tax exempt property on municipalities' fiscal health. Conclusions are that most such property is owned by universities, hospitals, and government organizations. These property owners often provide voluntary payment, though not enough to compensate their home municipalities. Proposals include mandating that such organizations pay compensatory non-tax payments or service fees, and using state funds to reimburse communities for the tax exempt property.

Forward to Prosperity: Removing Obstacles to Pennsylvania's Economic Performance (2005)

Pennsylvania Prosperity Coalition

<http://www.paprosperty.org/ForwardtoProsperity.pdf>

The Pennsylvania Prosperity Coalition (PPC) offers recommendations relating to planning that are designed to rejuvenate Pennsylvania's economy. The Coalition concluded that problematic issues included ineffective or nonexistent intergovernmental planning cooperation and unplanned low density development. The PPC provides recommendations for intergovernmental cooperation, improving regional and transportation planning, reforming business taxes, affordable housing, and mixed-use higher density development.

**Structuring Healthy Communities, Part 1:
Revenue Generation and Fiscal Health (2002)**

The Pennsylvania Economy League, Inc.

http://www.issuespa.net/shc/shc_final.pdf

The Pennsylvania Economic League analyzes the fiscal health of communities, focusing on the trend of deteriorating fiscal health as communities age. To counter these trends, the PEL provides recommendations of recalibrating levels of taxation; expanding tax revenue options; providing expertise to municipalities; and monitoring municipal fiscal health.

Committing to Prosperity, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institute (2007)

The Brookings Institute

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2007/03pennsylvania_metro/committing-toprosperity.pdf

This report is an update to a similar 2003 Bookings' report on how to rekindle Pennsylvania's economy using planning principles and through revitalizing the commonwealth's cities. Numerous recommendations concerning intergovernment collaboration; reform of employee pensions and other expenses; planning; and economic initiatives are detailed in the report.

Philadelphia's Quiet Crisis: The Rising Cost of Employee Benefits (2008)

The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Economy League of Philadelphia

http://www.pewtrusts.org/uploadedFiles/ww-wpewtrustsorg/Reports/Civic_initiative/PhiladelphiasQuietCrisis.pdf

This report investigates Philadelphia's costs of pension and health benefits for city workers. The findings are that if left unchecked, these costs will become unsustainable in the near future. Relatively small employee contributions toward pensions and health insurance and a large ratio of retired persons to employees are among the reasons for increasing costs. Numerous recommendations are provided to specifically address the issues of pensions, health benefits, and overall compensation.

Structuring Healthy Communities Municipal Case Studies (2009)

Pennsylvania Economy League

<http://www.plcm.org/vertical/Sites/%7B816DF97F-59D7-4E12-B207-1434C6304092%7D/uploads/%7B0C213DD2-BED8-46D7-A750-DE2CD29424DB%7D.PDF>

The Pennsylvania Economy League investigated several case studies to demonstrate how state laws, mandatory arbitration awards, and court decisions contribute to fiscal stress for many of the commonwealths' cities. Special attention is given to the impact of policies on sources of municipal revenue.

TEXAS

Tax Fairness: Property Tax Relief for Texans (2006)

Tax Reform Commission

http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/ttrc/files/TTRC_report.pdf

The purpose of this Commission was to explore means to provide property tax relief, largely by recalibrating the state's business tax structure. Among their recommendations include capping property taxes, restructuring the franchise tax, increasing tobacco taxes, preventing tax evasion, and using a portion of the state's surplus to "buy down property taxes".

VIRGINIA

Exploring Virginia's Tax Structure in a World of Change (2009)

Virginia Issues & Answers, Dr. John L. Knapp, Professor Emeritus at the University of Virginia

<http://www.via.vt.edu/summer09/feature4.pdf>

This report discusses multiple aspects of taxation in Virginia and how it can be restructured to ensure adequate revenue in the new service-based economy. Income, sales, fuel, and property taxes are analyzed in their present form. The report presents alternative methods for these taxes and how taxation in Virginia compares to other states.

Tax Restructuring in Virginia Counties: The Time Has Come (2002)

Virginia Issues & Answers, Ellen R. Davenport, CAE, Director of Public Finance for the Virginia Association of Counties

<http://www.via.vt.edu/fall02/feature5.pdf>

This document discusses the different tax structures between municipalities and counties in Virginia. Counties do not have the same revenue collecting capacity due to historically paying for fewer public services. As suburbanization continues in the 21st century, the report recommends broadening counties' tax base by giving them the same taxing abilities as municipalities to enable them to fund necessary public services.

Report of the Commission on Virginia's State and Local Tax Structure for the 21st Century (2001)

Commission on Virginia's State and Local Tax Structure for the 21st Century

[http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/By+Year/HD222001/\\$file/HD22_2001.pdf](http://leg2.state.va.us/dls/h&sdocs.nsf/By+Year/HD222001/$file/HD22_2001.pdf)

This Commission examined the differing responsibilities and tax structures of state and local government, and evaluated the current arrangements' ability to meet future needs. Among the Commission's recommendations: ensure that levels of government have adequate funding for their respective responsibilities; revise the state income and sales tax; increase opportunities for regional collaboration; and that the state assume full cost of certain mandated services.

WISCONSIN

Special Committee on Municipal Annexation (2007)

Special Committee on Municipal Annexation

http://www.legis.state.wi.us/lc/publications/rl/rl_2007_10.pdf

This document describes a bill that was reintroduced in 2007 based on recommendations from the Special Committee on Municipal Annexation. The Committee recommended that regulations be modified to enable local cooperative plans for boundary agreements and to resolve disputes. Other topics discussed are incentives to engage in mediation, the impact of annexation on property values, and how effectively public services can be provided after annexation.

State of Wisconsin Task Force on State and Local Government (2003)

Governor's Task Force on State and Local Government

<http://www.localgovinstitute.org/Reports/2003%20Sheehy%20Commission%20Report.pdf>

The Task Force found that Wisconsin's local governments exert more energy competing against one another than productively working with each other to attract new business, prompting the Task Force to suggest new policies that will encourage cooperation. Recommendations are provided relating to regional revenue sharing; modernizing Tax Incremental Finance; linking shared revenue to the percentage of state budget growth; shared revenue equity; and using shared revenue to reward service sharing.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

Guide to Successful Local Government Collaboration in America's Regions (2006)

NLC's City Futures Program

<http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/2381EA924E114002BF56C2E03F4AC5D8/GovtGovtCollabor.pdf>

This in-depth guide was created by the National League of Cities for local government employees to "better understand new opportunities for improving service delivery . . . through local government cooperation". The NLC described at length 17 types of collaboration, ranging from joint power agreements and councils of governments to local special districts and merger/consolidation. These examples are categorized into either "easier" or "harder" options.

Taxing Problems: Municipalities and America's Flawed System of Public Finance (2006)

National League of Cities (NLC) City Futures Program

<http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/FFD-B9F32357B44A7B6681CF414EDC3DE/Taxing%20Problems.pdf>

This document is designed to "reengage [government] officials . . . about our flawed system of public finance." The NLC identified shortcomings concerning equity and government performance. To address these issues the NLC suggested numerous solutions relating to equitable tax burdens, economic considerations, accountability, and the quality of public services, to name a few.

Service Delivery Models

The following is a list of reports and data relevant to the work of this committee.

IOWA

Program Elimination Commission Final Report (2002)

Program Elimination Commission

<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/GA/79GA/Interim/2002/comminfo/progelim/final.htm>

Presented here is a collection of reviews and recommendations that discuss the fiscal welfare of local government. The Task Force recognized that Kentucky has insufficient records of their local government finances and therefore cannot equip their government with the correct policies. Due to an amendment of the state constitution, this Task Force has been able to create an initiative that offers new fiscal growth within local government.

KENTUCKY

Local Government Finance in Kentucky: Time for Reform (2006)

Martin School of Public Policy and Administration and Department of Economics, University of Kentucky

<http://ideas.repec.org/p/ifr/wpaper/2007-02.html>

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MAINE

Pursuing Administrative Efficiency for Maine's Schools: How Our Past Can Inform our Current Decisions (2006)

College of Education and Human Development,
University of Maine

<http://sparkflashgap.net/School/PursuingAdministrativeEfficiency.pdf>

This report was created to inform decisions about how to contain educational costs and improve educational quality by restructuring the services and duties of school administration officials. The report discusses in depth how administrative positions have increased due to greater demand and the regulatory environment. It includes recommendations about how to contain the increase in administrative duties while improving educational services.

Maine's Intergovernmental Advisory Commission's Blueprint for Government (2006)

Maine's Intergovernmental Advisory Commission

http://www.maine.gov/iac/reports/Blueprint%20for%20Government%20_2006%20FINAL_.pdf

This Commission offers recommendations on eliminating redundancies and improving information sharing in government by standardizing communication methods. Specific recommendations have yet to be made, but will regard alternative and cost-effective ways of providing public services. The Commission places an emphasis on consolidating local services, encouraging regional entities with financial incentives, and improving training/professional standards of government officials.

Revitalizing Maine's Downtowns (2004)

The Maine Downtown Center and the Maine State Planning Office

http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/docs/legislature_gov/revitalizingdowntowns2004.pdf

This report suggests various methods to revitalize Maine's downtowns, often by analyzing similar methods implemented in other states. The topics discussed in the greatest depth include eliminating barriers to downtown revitalization as well as various methods to fund incremental urban renewal efforts that are sensitive to historic, cultural, and economic needs of downtown environments.

Reviving Service Centers: Report of the Task Force on Service Center Communities (1998)

Maine State Planning Office

<http://www.maine.gov/spo/landuse/docs/techassist/revivingservicecenters.pdf>

This Task Force recommends ways to revive the local economies of service center communities (i.e. communities that are employment centers of regional importance) and end the middle-class flight out of Maine's larger towns and cities. The report discusses how recommendations would be implemented using state and federal funds and through changes in tax policy. These recommendations are expected to not only improve the economic conditions in the service center communities, but also the surrounding areas that use their services.

Fund for the Efficient Delivery of Local and Regional Services (2008)

Department of Administrative and Financial Services

<http://www.maine.gov/dafs/FundReports/2008RegionalEfficiencyGrantReport.pdf>

This Fund encourages intergovernmental cooperation through state grants. Cases of study included emergency communication services, fire districts, and local government functions. These funds will improve the efficiency of regional services in order to reduce municipal and county spending as well as improve the quantity and quality of services provided.

MASSACHUSETTS

Local Communities at Risk: Revisiting the Fiscal Partnership between the Commonwealth and Cities and Towns (2005)

Municipal Finance Task Force

<http://www.hks.harvard.edu/rappaport/downloads/metromayors/report.pdf>

This Task Force provides an overview of municipalities enduring a difficult budget climate after the 2001 recession. It proceeds to make recommendations about how local governments can provide quality services while controlling costs and collecting revenue in a consistent and predictable manner. The Task Force also recommends that state aid to the municipalities more consistent, and that the state can fund regional agreements to encourage more efficient government.

MICHIGAN

Michigan's Land, Michigan's Future: Final Report of the Michigan Land Use Leadership Council (2003)

The Michigan Land Use Leadership Council

http://www.michiganlanduse.org/MLULC_FINAL_REPORT_0803.pdf

This Council has put forth land-use goals regarding improving the state economy, stewardship of environmental and historic resources, and “equitable distribution of benefits to all residents”. Many of the Council’s recommendations are to be developed using smart growth principles, and are intended to encourage alternative approaches to planning and intergovernmental and interagency cooperation. The Council recommends that incentives are provided both by the state and local governments.

Report on the Feasibility and Cost-Effectiveness of a Consolidated Statewide Health Benefits System for Michigan Public School Employees (2005)

HayGroup

http://council.legislature.mi.gov/files/full_report.pdf

In the service of the Michigan Legislative Council, the Hay Group analyzes in depth the benefits of placing all Michigan public school employees “under a state-wide group health benefits system.” The report compares the current health plan to methods used in other states and to alternative healthcare plans the state could implement. The Hay Group finds that “substantial” estimated savings could amount to between \$146 million and \$281 million, depending on which health plan is adopted.

Michigan Task Force on Jail and Prison Overcrowding, Final Report (2005)

Michigan Task Force on Jail and Prison Overcrowding

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/report_119595_7.pdf

This report offers recommendations about how to alleviate overcrowding in correctional facilities. Ideas are put forth that will reduce the number of offenders in prison facilities and primarily incarcerate only those who are a threat to public safety. The Task Force analyzes various causes that contribute to the problem and recommends new protocols and procedures, some of which require collaboration between state and local governments and with non-law enforcement agencies.

The Task Force on Local Government Services and Fiscal Stability: Final Report to the Governor (2006)

The Task Force on Local Government Services and Fiscal Stability

http://www.michigansuburbsalliance.org/downloads/municipal_finance/Governor_task_force_on_LGSFS_FINAL_REPORT.pdf

This Task Force evaluates policies hindering local governments from delivering services efficiently. Impediments include rising legacy costs to retired employees and high infrastructure costs even as government revenue is flat or declining. The Task Force recommends that state mandates and incentives encourage consolidating certain local government services and improve their cooperation to enhance the local governments' fiscal health. Specific examples include creating a center for intergovernmental cooperation and permitting municipalities additional means of collecting revenue.

Summary of Potential Recommendations (2009)

Commission for Government Efficiency

http://council.legislature.mi.gov/files/lcge/summary_potential_recommendations.pdf

This Commission summary briefly outlines potential recommendations for improving government efficiency. Topics discussed are wide-ranging and include education; health plans for government employees; correctional facilities; improving intergovernmental revenue sharing and providing incentives for service sharing; reducing waste and increasing productivity within state departments; estimating the appropriate composition of the government workforce; and making government purchases in bulk.

Coordinated Planning in Michigan: Three Case Studies (2002)

PIRGIM Education Fund

<https://www.policyarchive.org/bitstream/handle/10207/5493/MI-Coordinated%20Planning%20in%20Michigan%20text%20%2b%20cover.pdf?sequence=1>

This fund analyzes the low density development patterns prevalent in Michigan and how they have burdened local governments with various increased costs. The fund also offers solutions to counter these development patterns, principally by suggesting improved coordination between and within local planning agencies and municipalities. Urban utility boundaries, sub-regional agencies, cooperation with business leaders, and seeking citizen input are among the topics analyzed.

Financing Joint Public Ventures: Alternatives and Consequences (2003)

Southeast Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG)

<http://library.semco.org/InmagicGenie/DocumentFolder/FinancingJPS.pdf>

SEMCOG encourages intergovernmental cooperation to most effectively provide services in all economic climates. The Council argues the economic benefits of regionalizing certain services instead of privatization, but also analyzes the appropriateness of joint private/public ventures in certain situations. The Council also discusses how joint public ventures work in practice and how they can best be funded.

Intergovernmental Cooperation in Michigan: A Policy Conference Final Report (2007)

Michigan State University Extension

http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/modules.php?name=Documents&op=viewlive&sp_id=396

This is a summary of a dialogue that focused on policy options related to intergovernmental cooperation. Many of the topics discussed were nuanced by Michigan's challenging economic climate. Issues discussed at the conference included consolidation of local jurisdictions, revising boundary laws, removing legal barriers to intergovernmental cooperation, state involvement with special districts, economic development on a regional scale, and revenue sharing.

Intergovernmental Contracting and Collaboration (2007)

Michigan State University Extension

<http://web1.msue.msu.edu/iac/temp/msue/outcomes/legis07/intergovernmental-contracting-collaboration-2-28-07.pdf>

This document briefly explains how local governments provide services that could be more efficiently distributed through cooperation and consolidation. The Michigan State University Extension has offered assistance consisting of educational and technical services to local governments to help them explore their options. Successful examples of collaboration include the consolidation of local government units and emergency services.

School District Consolidation, Size and Spending: An Evaluation (2007)

Mackinac Center for Public Policy

<http://www.mackinac.org/archives/2007/s2007-06.pdf>

The Mackinac Center lays out a report that challenges the assertion that consolidating school districts will improve efficiency. Instead the Center concludes that the optimal school district size is 2,900 students, and that breaking up larger districts could in fact improve efficiency more than consolidation. The Center also advocates restructuring incentives in the education system so that districts are financially rewarded for controlling costs and improving quality, as well as increasing parental choice and competition in schooling.

The Six Pillars for Michigan's Prosperity: Our Best and Future Hope

http://www.peopleandland.org/resourcelibrary/pillars/PAL_Six_Pillars_for_Michigians_Prosperty.pdf

This report provides an overview of Michigan's efforts to build and retain its skilled labor force. There are various recommendations discussed for improving the following pillars of a prosperous state. They pertain to education, revitalized urban areas, a knowledge-based economy, natural and agricultural resources, and an inclusive entrepreneurial culture.

Time Running out for Shared Revenue. Michigan Suburbs Alliance (2007)

Michigan Suburbs Alliance

http://www.michigansuburbsalliance.org/downloads/IntheRing_Q107_FINAL.pdf

This organization identifies problems associated with the revenue sharing of state funds to local governments. The funds to local governments are often not fully funded, and are not sustainable due to local government costs rising faster than the source of shared revenue (primarily the sales tax). The organization looks to other states for examples of regional or state pooling of funds and redistributing them according to a point-system based on property values and regional disparities.

School District and Municipal Reorganization: Research Findings & Policy Proposals (2007)

Michigan Senate, Local, Urban and State Affairs Committee

http://www.landpolicy.msu.edu/modules.php?name=Documents&op=viewlive&sp_id=306

This report documents “the current state of thinking on municipal and school district reorganization” over the past thirty years and concludes with policies relating to each topic discussed. Among the policies discussed in the document: police services, fire services, roads, solid waste and water, and property tax assessments. The Committee discussed incentives to encourage intergovernmental cooperation as well as policy proposals for municipal consolidation.

Approaches to Consolidating Local Government Services (2008)

Citizens Research Council of Michigan

<http://crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2008/rpt354.pdf>

This report analyzes the different benefits of collaboration when the service provided is either capital intensive, skill intensive, or labor intensive. Various approaches to collaboration are discussed, as are incentives provided by counties and the state to help smaller municipalities finance start-up costs and consolidate services.

Michigan Elections in the 21st Century (2007)

Senate Campaign and Election Oversight Committee

http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/publications/35/20080204_Elections_Reform.pdf

This Committee’s report summarizes issues with Michigan’s election system. Issues regarding electoral processes range from reorganizing polling methods and creating super precincts to term limits and which times of the year are best for school elections. Also discussed by the Committee are potential solutions to enhance transparency and improve the dialogue surrounding the electoral process.

Reforming the Process for Identifying and Funding Section 29 Mandates on Local Government (2009)

Citizens Research Council of Michigan

<http://crcmich.org/PUBLICAT/2000s/2009/rpt355.pdf>

This Council analyzes how to address the issue of unfunded mandates that were imposed on local governments despite the prohibition of such mandates in the Michigan state constitution. The Council discusses the shortcomings of the current system under which mandates are imposed, and continues by detailing practices in other states that do fund mandates and how Michigan can emulate their success.

Choices in Regional Governance Structures: Special Districts as Collaboration Mechanisms (2009)

Wayne State University Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation

http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=interlocal_coop

This report analyzes under which circumstances local organizations can voluntarily collaborate on regional needs such as library, hospital, and fire services. It also considers when a state regulated form of collaboration is more effective at delivering local services. The report discusses benefits efficiency gained from voluntary cooperation as well as its limitations.

City Managers, Career Incentives, and Service Delivery Decisions: The Effects of Managerial Ambition on Interlocal Cooperation Choices (2008)

Wayne State University Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation

http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/interlocal_coop/40/

This study uses hypothesis testing to determine the underlying motivations for city managers who must broker deals with other municipalities. The study concluded that city managers generally engage in intergovernmental collaboration to advance their own careers rather than engage in agreements that are perceived as being beneficial to the region.

Confronting Fiscal Stress in Municipal Governments: Support by Michigan Residents for Eight Common Strategies (2008)

Wayne State University Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation

http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1039&context=interlocal_coop

This report puts forth possible solutions to help alleviate the challenging fiscal climate that characterizes many Michigan municipalities. Remedies featured in the report fall under reducing costs through regional collaboration, as well as obtaining additional sources of revenue through new taxes or state and federal aid. Included is a survey conducted to determine how much the public supported multiple local programs and solutions.

Fiscal Conditions, Political Interests, and Service Outsourcing: The Case of Georgia Counties (2008)

Wayne State University Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation

http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=interlocal_coop

This paper uses regression analysis to study “Georgia’s counties’ public service outsourcing decisions.” It uses financial and operational records to determine the effects of fiscal conditions and political interests on the decision to outsource the services. The findings are that fiscal and political characteristics have real impacts on outsourcing decisions and whether it is the private or public sector that provides the services.

Governance by Agreements: Why do Local Governments Enter into Multilateral Agreements? (2008)

Wayne State University Working Group on Interlocal Services Cooperation

http://digitalcommons.wayne.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1038&context=interlocal_coop

This is a study that analyzes the barriers to multilateral agreements between local governments and why such agreements are made. The study finds that multilateral agreements could reduce inefficiencies and therefore costs. However, there are often increased transaction and administrative costs, political differences, and rivalries than discourage multilateral collaboration; these issues are discussed in detail.

MINNESOTA

Final Report of the Municipal Boundary Adjustment Advisory Task Force (2009)

The Municipal Boundary Adjustment Advisory Task Force

<http://www.mba.state.mn.us/MBA%20Task%20Force%20Final%20Report%20-%20Feb%202009.pdf>

This Task Force recommends changes for Municipal Boundary Adjustments relating to residential development. Issues addressed include; density and infrastructure services; issues of annexation; an equitable tax base in which cities do not subsidize townships' services; and planning. Multiple key issues are without recommendations due to an inability to achieve a consensus within the Task Force. Task Force members aligned themselves generally with a "township position" or a "city position", their perspectives are discussed at length.

Public Safety Answering Point Consolidation (2004)

Department of Public Safety

<http://www.docstoc.com/docs/3857436/Department-of-Public-Safety-Public-Safety-Answering-Point-Consolidation-February>

This Commission discusses the state of Public Safety Answering Point operations in Minnesota, and recommends policies concerning consolidating these operations. When doing so, factors such as cost-benefit analysis, impacts on public safety, best practice models, and possible incentives for consolidation are be considered.

911 Dispatching: A Best Practice Review (1998)

Office of the Legislative Auditor

<https://www.auditor.state.mn.us/default.aspx?page=bestPracticesReviews>

The Office of the Legislative Auditor reviews the most effective practices of emergency dispatching and how they are influenced by consolidation of these services between and among counties and cities. The report also analyzes best practices at length and "encourages the adoption of [the most effective] methods wherever appropriate."

MISSISSIPPI

Report of the Task Force on Local Government Information Systems (2003)

Task Force on Local Government Information Systems

<http://www.mssc.state.ms.us/commissions-forcescommittees/its2les.pdf>

This Task Force analyzes and makes recommendations about improving the quality, uniformity, and efficiency of information systems in Mississippi. Technicalities concerning hardware and software needs; standardizing diverse practices currently used; and sources of funding are discussed. The Task Force also encourages collaboration between and among state and local governments to implement these recommendations to reduce redundancies and improve efficiency.

MISSOURI

Property Tax Taskforce Report (2008)

Task Force on Property Tax

<http://www.house.mo.gov/billtracking/bills073/commit/Property%20Taskforce%20Report%20Jan%202008.pdf>

This Task Force makes recommendations concerning how property taxes can be restructured to make them more equitable and to keep property tax rates from rising too quickly. Specific recommendations include limiting spending increases in districts at or near the rate of inflation, reviewing economic development incentives, standardizing assessment rates among different land uses, and finding alternative methods to finance schools that are less reliant on property taxes.

NEVADA

Incorporation of Towns (2003)

<http://www.leg.state.nv.us/lcb/research/03InterimReports/Bulletin03-03.pdf>

This Commission studied alternative means to incorporate or in select cases unincorporate towns. Traditionally, the decision of incorporating a community has been based solely on population, however the Commission proposed also considering assessed valuation for taxation purposes, possible competition with other municipalities, and other criteria. Support for alternative means of incorporation came from municipalities and was generally opposed by county governments. The Commission did not adopt any recommendations.

NEW JERSEY

State of New Jersey Property Tax Convention Task Force (2004)

Property Tax Convention Task Force to the Governor and Legislature

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/legislativepub/reports/Property_Tax_Convention_Task_Force.pdf

This Task Force offers recommendations about how best to provide property tax relief in New Jersey and how to overcome any legal challenges associated with changing the tax code. Specifically, the Task Forces focuses on eliminating inequities in taxation as they relate to lower income households, greater uniformity in their application, and alternative means to fund public services.

New Jersey 911 Consolidation Study (2006)

Rutgers: The State University of New Jersey, Edward J. Bloustein School of Planning and Public Policy

http://www.nj.gov/911/resource/study/nj9-1-1-consolidation_study_final_report_october06.pdf

This report finds that a ‘majority of the 9-1-1 call centers . . . are likely to be inefficient and reasonable candidates for consolidation.’ To improve the efficiency and reduce costs, the report recommends incentivizing consolidation of call centers with state grants. Other recommendations include public education and technical assistance for local leaders as well as establishing clear standards for high quality service.

Public Employee Benefits Reform (2006)

Special Session Joint Legislative Commission

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/PropertyTaxSession/OPI/jcpe_final_report.pdf

This Committee offered proposals concerning how the government can best provide for “the maintenance and support of a system of free public schools.” The report provides an overview of the funding and spending patterns of public education in the state. The 28 recommendations focus on a formula to fund districts based on need, improve accountability and monitoring of services provided, appropriate resources for special education, and budget controls.

A Quest for Efficiency in Local Governance (2009)

Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization and Consolidation Commission

http://www.state.nj.us/dca/affiliates/luarcc/pdf/2009report_-_a_quest_for_efficiency_in_local_governance.pdf

The purpose of the Commission was to report how municipalities can most effectively economize their resources and if there is an optimal size for a municipality. Findings on an optimal size were inconclusive. However, the Commission concluded that there are significant potential savings through different examples of service sharing due to eliminating redundancies and being better able to respond to economic stagnation. The Commission also stressed the importance of preserving community character after consolidation, the importance of financial incentives, and the importance of making data pertinent to consolidation freely available.

Overview of the Literature Review and Analysis on Five Subjects Related to the Cost-Efficiency of Municipal Government (2009)

Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization and Consolidation Commission

http://www.nj.gov/dca/affiliates/luarcc/pdf/final_overview_report.pdf

The purpose of this Commission was to gather information on possible efficiencies gained through the realignment of local units and service sharing. Findings of the Commission included that consolidation does not necessarily increase efficiency; that there are economies and diseconomies of scale associated with consolidation; regionalization and privatization improve efficiency in certain applications; and that hybrid delivery arrangements can reduce potential loss of local control in a newly consolidated government.

Literature Review and Analysis Related to Optimal Municipal Size (2009)

Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization and Consolidation Commission

http://www.nj.gov/dca/affiliates/luarcc/pdf/final_service_delivery_arrangements.pdf

This literature review investigates potential models that maximize efficiency and quality of public services. The review considers five broad categories of contractual agreements: public and/or private entities, centralized services, special districts, joint boards, and regional policy groups. The Commission's conclusions are that consolidation and service sharing produce mixed results in efficiency gains due to each case's unique context.

Sharing Available Resources Efficiently: Best Practices Handbook (2006)

New Jersey Department of Community Affairs

http://www.nj.gov/dca/lgs/share/share_handbook.pdf

This “handbook” helps guide local officials’ decision making on issues of shared public services. Among the guidance the document offers are issues such as finding opportunities for service sharing; sharing with different kinds of local government entities; and obtaining grants. The handbook provides diverse examples that include animal control services, records management, and municipal courts.

The LUARCC: A Law to Suggest and Encourage Local Government Consolidations (2007)

New Jersey State League of Municipalities

http://www.njslom.org/mag1107_article_pg110.html

This article details the rationale for the law creating what became the Local Unit Alignment, Reorganization, and Consolidation Commission. In it, the Commission’s purpose and areas of focus are explained in detail. This Commission was based upon a previous commission that was considered successful because its recommendations could be approved only in their entirety; however any recommendations made would not necessarily be mandatory.

Special Session Joint Legislative Commission

http://www.njleg.state.nj.us/PropertyTaxSession/JCGO_Report111506.pdf

The Commission reviews and offered proposals relating to “the sharing of services and regionalization of functions at all levels of government.” The Commission finds that the numerous overlapping local government entities create a system of inefficiency and redundancy. Among the eighteen recommendations: streamlining regulation to encourage collaboration, creating a local commission to facilitate mergers, and standardizing assessments.

NEW YORK

New York State Commission on Property Tax Relief (2008)

New York State Commission on Property Tax Relief

<http://www.cptr.state.ny.us/>

This Commission was formed to investigate the causes for New York State's high property taxes and provides recommendations to address the issue. The Commission attributed high property taxes to exceptionally high education spending per student; costly mandates; and too many school districts. Recommendations included a property tax cap; reevaluating costly state mandates and laws; and tax relief for individuals based on their ability to pay.

A Court System for the Future: The Promise of Court Restructuring in New York State (2007)

Special Commission on the Future of the New York State Courts

http://www.juryproject.org/documents/Court_Restructuring_2007.pdf

This report begins by asserting that "New York State has the most archaic and bizarrely convoluted court structure in the country." The report states that a multitude of overlapping trial courts are costly, duplicative, and a mental burden to litigants. The Commission recommends consolidating major trial courts, merging some courts into the state Supreme Court, as well as other restructuring measures.

State and Local Governments Partnering for a Better New York (2001)

Quality Communities Interagency Task Force

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/scandoclinks/ocm46867192.htm>

This report discusses the benefits and impacts of downtown revitalization, environmental protections, sustainable development, and economic development. Forty-one recommendations are provided relating to: collaboration between state and local government and between agencies; reinvesting in downtowns; preserving agricultural and open space; providing state assistance to coordinate intergovernmental collaboration; transportation planning and maintenance; and promoting economic development.

Intermunicipal Cooperation and Consolidation: Exploring Opportunities for Savings and Improved Service Delivery

Office of the New York State Comptroller, Division of Local Government and School Accountability

<http://www.osc.state.ny.us/localgov/pubs/research/cooperation1.pdf>

This report offers recommendations of how the 2,300 school districts and municipalities in New York State can offer public services more efficiently and effectively. The contents of the report focus on reviewing collaborative policies and implementations inside and outside the state. Fiscally responsible strategies are also discussed, as are important issues that officials might face when pursuing cooperative ventures.

NORTH CAROLINA

Policy Proposals for Consideration – Joint Legislative Commission on Municipal Annexation (2009)

Joint Legislative Commission on Municipal Annexation

http://www.stopncannexation.com/Joint_Commission_Recomendations.pdf

This brief document offers proposals for assessing the fiscal feasibility of annexation. The Commission discusses how to finance infrastructure investments in a newly annexed area and how to revise the area's land-use policies for a more urban environment. The Commission also discusses tax-related issues in the newly annexed area.

21st Century Transportation Committee Final Report (2009)

General Assembly of North Carolina

<http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/21stCenturyTransportation/Final%20Report/Final%20Report.pdf>

This final report discusses ways to fund and improve transportation in the state, from bicycling to air travel, to facilitate economic vitality. There is also discussion of how to divide the responsibilities of transportation funding and operations among the state and local governments, and how to coordinate their transportation planning. Tolls, vehicle fees based on weight, and intermodal transportation are among the policy options discussed.

Improving Regional Economic Development through Structural Changes and Performance Measurement Incentives (2008)

Legislative Services Office of the North Carolina General Assembly

http://www.ncleg.net/PED/Reports/documents/RED/Reg_Econ_Dev_Report.pdf

The purpose of this report is to “evaluate the structure and funding” of seven regional economic development organizations that facilitate business investment in the state. The organizations are not structured identically, and there is discussion of how to standardize their regulations. Recommendations are concerned with how to most effectively organize and fund these regional entities, and how to make the organizations accountable for their results.

Blue Ribbon Commission to Study North Carolina Urban Transportation Needs Final Report (2006)

General Assembly of North Carolina

<http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/legislativepublications/Study%20Reports%20to%20the%202006%20NCGA/Urban%20Transportation%20Needs%20%20Blue%20Ribbon%20Commission.pdf>

This Commission examined issues of urban transportation throughout the state, primarily focusing on financing issues and how to address congestion. The report details a number of recommendations including toll roads, mass transit, and methods to obtain state and federal funds.

Commission on Smart Growth, Growth Management and Development: Findings and Recommendations (2001)

Commission on Smart Growth, Growth Management and Development

[http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/smartgrowth/Findings%20and%20Recommendations%20\(Fall%202001\).pdf](http://www.ncleg.net/documentsites/committees/smartgrowth/Findings%20and%20Recommendations%20(Fall%202001).pdf)

This Commission produced a comprehensive report on sustainable means to manage rapid population growth in the North Carolina. They recommend that “smart growth” policies be implemented to address the issue, and that these policies rely less on mandates and more on incentives. The Commission called for a regional approach to transportation and open space planning. It also recommended that local governments play a primary role in implementing these policies, and that there should be more cooperation between the state and cities.

OKLAHOMA

Report of the Task Force on School District Administrative Efficiency (2009)

Task Force on School District Administrative Efficiency

http://www.oksenate.gov/publications/issue_papers/education/school_dist_admin_tf_report.pdf

This Task Force investigated possible means of improving efficiency of school districts through reorganization and consolidation. They recommended service sharing, consolidation, as well as non-administrative cost saving techniques. The Task Force also recommended monitoring district achievement and recognizing successful practices.

The Governor's EMS Readiness Task Force Final Report (2007)

EMS Readiness Task Force

<http://www.ok.gov/health/documents/GTFFinal-Report.pdf>

This final report discusses the poor state of Emergency Medical Services employee benefits and pay compared to other emergency personnel, the consequent issue of retention, and other shortcomings of the state's EMS. Recommendations include improving response readiness; increasing funding; regionalizing select EMS systems; and improving organization of the many EMS providers as well as personnel training and retention.

OREGON

Oregon Task Force on Land Use Planning – Final Report to the 2009 Oregon Legislature (2009)

Oregon Task Force on Land Use Planning

http://egov.oregon.gov/LCD/docs/budget/wm2009/b4-Big_Look_Report.pdf

The purpose of this Task Force was to review Oregon's land use policies to determine how it is meeting the needs of Oregonians. The Task Force concluded the current land use system is too much of a "one size fits all" and should be more flexible. It was also recommended that current land use policies be simplified and incorporate more citizen participation. The report highlights the role of the state, which can coordinate planning and economic development as well as foster local collaboration.

State Interim Task Force on Library Cooperation – Final Report (2002)

Senate Interim Task Force on Library Cooperation

http://msl.state.mt.us/About_MSL/fulfillment_task_force/archive/2008/01/20080125orlibcoop.pdf

The Task Force investigated ways for libraries to improve efficiency and services and offer equitable library services to all Oregonians through cooperation. The Task Force recommends eliminating or creating various programs, often utilizing state grants and other assistance.

PENNSYLVANIA

Approaches Used in Other States to Provide Property Tax Relief and Possible Options for Pennsylvania (2002)

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2002/164.PDF>

This Committee's report discusses how to eliminate or reduce property taxes as a source of revenue for Pennsylvania's public schools. After evaluating practices in other states, the Committee recommended several models similar to Michigan's designed to shift most funding from local government to the state. Some models ensure equal spending for similarly situated students.

DCNR White Paper on Counties, Cities, and Towns (2003)

Counties, Cities and Towns Writing Team

<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/info/shapefuture/02-cct.pdf>

The DCNR's white paper provides an overview of suburbanization and population trends in Pennsylvania, discussing the economic, environmental, and social benefits of denser, planned growth and revitalizing cities and towns. The organization supports smart growth policies and a regional approach to land use planning; advocates the use of incentives; and supports keeping the public better informed about smart growth policies. The organization states that these positions can facilitate growth in cities and towns.

The Feasibility of Placing Public School Employees under the Commonwealth's Jurisdiction for the Purpose of Providing Health Benefits (2004)

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2004/161.PDF>

The Hay Group carried out this extensive study to determine if it was cost effective to place state and public school employees under the same health benefits program. The plan recommended by the firm is established by statute and governed by a board consisting of labor and management. Such a plan is projected to save in excess of \$500 million. Topics considered in the report include the level of options available, if the plan should be mandatory, and how quickly it should be phased in.

Review of the Effectiveness of the Civil Service System in County Government

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee
(2004)

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2004/251.PDF>

This study carried out by the Hay Group investigates the civil service system employment practices in county government. Issues considered include but are not limited to recruitment, retention, promotion, and personnel management. The firm recommended an interagency policy-setting group, reassessing the priority given to veterans, and recalibrating hiring criteria for employees. As a last resort, a county can amend or terminate its contract with the State Civil Service Commission.

Report to the Senate of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (2004)

Senate Resolution 60 Commission (Improving
Emergency Services Delivery)

http://www.swarthmorepa.org/government/documents/senatereport60_000.pdf

This Commission recommends how to improve the effectiveness of emergency service delivery via financial incentives and legislation. Recommendations concentrated on funding, recruitment and retention, possible legislation, and alternative service delivery models.

The Feasibility of Regionalizing Pennsylvania's Volunteer Fire Companies (2005)

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2005/250.PDF>

The report from this Committee considers the benefits of regionalizing volunteer fire companies. Pennsylvania's unrivaled number of fire companies results in an inefficient duplicity of resources. Alternative forms of consolidation and service sharing as well as incentives to encourage such behavior are discussed.

Intergovernmental Cooperation Handbook, 6th Edition (2006)

Governor's Center for Local Government Services

<http://www.newpa.com/get-local-gov-support/publications/download.aspx?id=382>

This "handbook" provides an encyclopedic overview of local government cooperation by detailing issues related to intergovernmental cooperation and methods used to address them. The publication discusses alternative funding structures, alternative cooperation programs such as joint authority methods and cooperative planning, and examples of cooperation for specific public services.

A Study of the Cost Effectiveness of Consolidating Pennsylvania School Districts: Part 1 of 2 Statewide Analysis, Prepared for the Pennsylvania Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

Standard and Poor's School Evaluation Services(2007)

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2007/289.PDF>

The firm Standard and Poor's analyzed whether consolidation and/or service sharing could improve the cost effectiveness, quality, and availability of services in smaller school districts. The firm observed a general trend in which costs fell for districts as the student population approached 3,000, but featured increasing costs past this threshold. The study also investigates the effects of consolidation or service sharing on school transportation and other logistical issues.

Common Cents Shared Services Initiative: Pilot School District Report District: Jefferson-Morgan (2008)

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Education

http://www.pde.state.pa.us/newsroom/lib/newsroom/Jefferson-Morgan_PDE_Common_Cents_Pilot_Report_08252008_Final.pdf

This report uses the Jefferson-Morgan school district for a pilot study to identify opportunities in sharing services to reduce costs. Areas of focus included transportation, food services, instruction, purchasing, facilities, and technology. The Common Cents Team offers recommendations to facilitate shared services in each of these areas.

Creating a Sustainable Solution for Pennsylvania: Governor's Sustainable Infrastructure Task Force Report (2008)

Governor's Sustainable Infrastructure Task Force

<http://www.depweb.state.pa.us/watersupply/lib/watersupply/municipalfinance/taskforce/3800-bk-dep4208.pdf>

The purpose of this task force was to assess the state's water infrastructure needs as well as alternative methods for funding and for improving management efficiency. The Task Force recommended increasing efficiency using improved methods, regionalization, and sharing services. Additionally, it was recommended that the cost to consumers increase to reflect the true cost of water and sewer services, and supported seeking additional state and federal funds.

A Review of the Commonwealth's Strategic Sourcing Initiative in Procuring Goods and Services (2008)

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2008/14prs.PDF>

This Committee investigated more efficient methods for purchasing commodities ranging from food to furniture, and found that "strategic resourcing" resulted in considerable savings. Among the recommendations offered are establishing "commodity councils" that would help improve the contracting process with vendors, reviewing the impact on businesses owned by women and minorities, and improving documentation of the post-bid process.

A Study of Costs and Services in Pennsylvania's County Adult Probation System (2000)

Legislative Budget and Finance Committee

<http://lbfc.legis.state.pa.us/reports/2000/232.PDF>

This report features an analysis of the funding and cost of the adult probation system, whose role has expanded rapidly as the number of adults on probation has increased. Recommendations pertain to reviewing or changing state funding methods, working with other government agencies to establish reasonable workload standards, and solicit data and recommendations from other government agencies.

Final Report of the PPA MPC Task Force to PPA Legislative Committee (2002)

PPA Legislative Committee

http://www.planningpa.org/mpc_finalreport04.pdf

This Committee critiques the Municipal Planning Code, revising it to facilitate legislation consistent with current planning principles. Recommendations include creating a state planning board and planning office, and to continually revise the MPC. The Committee also recommends education for planners and members of the public and government, and training/credentialing for planners.

Forward to Prosperity: Removing Obstacles to Pennsylvania's Economic Performance (2005)

Pennsylvania Prosperity Coalition

<http://www.paprospersity.org/ForwardtoProsperity.pdf>

The Pennsylvania Prosperity Coalition (PPC) offers recommendations relating to planning that are designed to rejuvenate Pennsylvania's economy. The Coalition concluded that problematic issues included ineffective or nonexistent intergovernmental planning cooperation and unplanned low density development. The PPC provides recommendations for intergovernmental cooperation, improving regional and transportation planning, reforming business taxes, affordable housing, and mixed-use higher density development.

Committing to Prosperity, Metropolitan Policy Program, The Brookings Institute (2007)

The Brookings Institute

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2007/03pennsylvania_metro/committing-toprosperity.pdf

This report is an update to a similar 2003 Bookings' report on how to rekindle Pennsylvania's economy using planning principles and through revitalizing the commonwealth's cities. Numerous recommendations concerning intergovernment collaboration; reform of employee pensions and other expenses; planning; and economic initiatives are detailed in the report.

Restoring Prosperity: The State Role In Revitalizing America's Older Industrial Cities (2007)

The Brookings Institution Metropolitan Policy Program

http://www.brookings.edu/~media/Files/rc/reports/2007/05metropolitanpolicy_vey/20070520_oic.pdf

This report discusses the economic challenges facing industrial cities in the Midwest and Northeast. Brookings concludes that these cities are capable of a comeback, assisted by the state. Numerous recommendations include "fixing basics" such as schools and crime; investing in information-based employment; creating a business friendly environment; and metropolitan wide approaches to collaboration and service sharing.

Structuring Healthy Communities Municipal Case Studies (2009)

Pennsylvania Economy League

<http://www.plcm.org/vertical/Sites/%7B816DF97F-59D7-4E12-B207-1434C6304092%7D/uploads/%7B0C213DD2-BED8-46D7-A750-DE2CD29424DB%7D.PDF>

The Pennsylvania Economy League investigated several case studies to demonstrate how state laws, mandatory arbitration awards, and court decisions contribute to fiscal stress for many of the commonwealths' cities. Special attention is given to the impact of policies on sources of municipal revenue.

TENNESSEE

Building and Financing Jails in Tennessee (2006)

Office of Research and Education Accountability (OREA)

<http://www.comptroller1.state.tn.us/repository/RE/jails2006.pdf>

This report discusses costs associated with construction and maintenance of correctional facilities. The Office of Research and Education Accountability found that technical assistance is not sought during construction and that cutting costs during the building process may increase the cost of maintenance. Multiple recommendations relating to facility design, funding, and construction are provided. It is also recommended that regional facilities be considered.

VERMONT

2009 Report on Act 82. Section 8: An Act Relating to Education Quality and Cost Control: Weighted Membership (2009)

Vermont Department of Education

<http://www.leg.state.vt.us/reports/2009ExternalReports/244330.pdf>

This brief report discusses the formula for disbursing state funds based on individual student needs such as special services or age. It is recommended that the school allocate more funds for secondary students based on a specific formula. There was no recommendation regarding special services because isolating the costs for students requiring such services proved too complex a task.

Dispatch Services Executive Summary (2005)

Vermont Department of Public Safety and Vermont Communications Study Group

http://www.dps.state.vt.us/vcomm/DispatchES-Final_09272005.pdf

This executive summary considers how to improve emergency dispatching services. There is discussion of the present dispatching environment and an assessment of conformance with national standards. Recommendations provided by the Study Group include fewer and larger dispatch centers, intergovernment cooperation, restructuring personnel costs, as well as recommendations relating to training and technology.

VIRGINIA

Virginia's Government Structure (2001)

Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service: The Virginia News Letter

<http://www.coopercenter.org/publications/site-files/vanl/vanl1201.pdf>

This is an adaption of a keynote address by former Governor Gerald L. Baliles that addresses the asymmetry in governance between counties and municipalities. He recommended three proposals to address these issues: to clearly define the role of local governments, to consolidate certain local government functions, and to reorganize legislative districts that respect communities of interest to give these communities a clear voice in state government.

WASHINGTON

The Price of Government: Budgeting For Outcomes (2005)

The Public Strategies Group

<http://www.psg.us/reinvention/pogbforeinvent.html>

This document advocates government budgets “producing results citizens value at a price they are willing to pay” rather than simply rescaling the previous year’s budget. Steps outlined to this end include: establishing how much citizens are willing to pay for the services; a merit-based method of selecting methods to provide services; and negotiating performance agreements with chosen providers. Other advice and steps are listed as well.

WEST VIRGINIA

Local Government Consolidation: Lessons for West Virginia (2005)

Center for Business and Economic Research—Marshall University

http://www.marshall.edu/cber/research/gov/government_consolidation.pdf

This report reviews consolidations of counties and cities in other states to provide lessons for similar procedures in West Virginia. The findings include that there is no one size fits all method for consolidation, and that such consolidations often require one to several decades to garner sufficient support. Advantages and disadvantages are discussed, as are other recommendations relating to voluntary implementation of consolidation and consolidating some of the state’s other regional functions.

WISCONSIN

Citizen—Community—Government—Wisconsin: The 21st Century (1995)

Commission for the Study of Administrative Value and Efficiency

<http://www.localgovinstitute.org/Reports/1995%20SAVE%20Commission%20Report.pdf>

This broad study investigates what role government should play in Wisconsin and how this role will improve the quality of communities and public services in the state. The Commission puts forth twenty-two goals relating to issues of the responsibility of citizens and leaders, land use policies, the economic role of technology, lifelong education, and a process of continual renewal of government operations to improve efficiency.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

Guide to Successful Local Government Collaboration in America's Regions (2006)

NLC's City Futures Program

<http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/2381EA924E114002BF56C2E03F4AC5D8/GovtGovtCollabor.pdf>

This in-depth guide was created by the National League of Cities for local government employees to “better understand new opportunities for improving service delivery . . . through local government cooperation”. The NLC described at length 17 types of collaboration, ranging from joint power agreements and councils of governments to local special districts and merger/consolidation. These examples are categorized into either “easier” or “harder” options.

SOUTHERN REGIONAL EDUCATION BOARD

Focus on Governance in K-12 Education: Local – Level Models (2009)

Southern Regional Education Board

http://www.sreb.org/publications/2009/09S01_Focus_Local_Governance.pdf

The focus of this document was an overview of governance in K-12 education in the 16 states included in the Southern Regional Education Board. The Board discussed characteristics of boards of education and superintendents such as are whether they elected or appointed and how they share responsibilities. Qualifications for superintendents and board members and how long they may serve a term are also discussed.