



# Working with Other Governments

A City Practices Brief

August 2007

Working with other governments can provide an opportunity to improve service delivery and cost savings, strengthen advocacy efforts and address regional-scale problems more successfully. This *City Practices Brief* presents examples of local governments working with other local governments and regional stakeholders to achieve such goals. For more information about ways to engage with your regional neighbors and stakeholders, see NLC's [Guide to Local Government Collaboration in America's Regions](#). Also, see [Unifying Voices, Confronting Challenges: A resource Guide for Developing Regional Collaborations of First tier Suburbs](#), both available on the NLC website, [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org).

For more examples, visit the City Practices database also on the NLC website.

-----

## Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD) Akron, Ohio and surrounding townships

For more information, contact: Robert Bowman, Deputy Mayor for Economic Development  
[bowmaro@ci.akron.oh.us](mailto:bowmaro@ci.akron.oh.us)  
(330) 375-2133

Faced with an ongoing struggle between the central city and its surrounding townships in regard to growth and development, Akron created Joint Economic Development Districts (JEDD) as an economic development alternative to annexation. Through JEDDs, the townships obtain property tax-paying developments while retaining their sovereignty. At the same time, Akron receives municipal income tax from business by providing central water and sewer services to unincorporated areas without annexing them. To compensate Akron Public Schools for the loss of potential state and local tax revenues, the mayor earmarked 12 percent of the service tax revenues for the Akron Public School District. The JEDD earned Akron First Place Honors in the 1999 City Livability Awards sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and Waste Management, Inc.

---

## Municipal Partnership Alcoa and Maryville, Tennessee

For more information, contact: Pamela A. Arnett, Public Information Officer  
[parnett@ci.maryville.tn.us](mailto:parnett@ci.maryville.tn.us)  
(865) 981-1336

Alcoa and Maryville continue to maintain their own tradition, character, and identity while searching for innovative ways to cooperatively stretch tax dollars for their citizens. In conjunction with Blount County, the two communities jointly recruit industry through an economic development board funded by all three jurisdictions. One endeavor created two new industrial parks in which each community shares in the land, development, profits, and maintenance costs of the parks. The three governments invested nearly \$8 million in industrial parks which comprise nearly 400 acres of land. Other partnerships include shared responsibility for public services such as law enforcement, a 911 communications center, geographic information system, fiber optic communications, a 13.5 mile greenway trail, recycling centers, power stations, a regional wastewater treatment plant, and county library system. Officials estimate the various operating agreements save each government entity more than \$300,000 per year in staffing costs. This cooperation earned Alcoa and Maryville a 1999 Tennessee Municipal League Award for their efforts in interlocal government and the 1999 International City/County Management Association's Program Excellence Award for Intergovernmental Cooperation.

**Growth and Transportation Mediation Process  
Aurora, Greenwood Village and Arapahoe County, Colorado**

For more information, contact: Nancy Sharpe, Mayor  
nsharpe@greenwoodvillage.com  
(303) 486-5741

The Cities of Greenwood Village and Aurora, and Arapahoe County entered into a mediation process to reach consensus on a variety of growth and transportation issues. The mediation process yielded a plan for growth management and transportation planning that addressed the concerns of each community. They then produced an intergovernmental agreement detailing transportation projects, and designating which jurisdiction was responsible for the construction and funding of which project. This program won an honorable mention Municipal Achievement Award for cities between 2,000 and 20,000 population from the Colorado Municipal League.

---

**Joint Boards of Selectman  
Ayer, Harvard, Lancaster and Shirley, Massachusetts**

For more information, contact: Shaun Suhoski, Town Administrator  
[ta@ayer.ma.us](mailto:ta@ayer.ma.us)  
(978) 772-8220

The towns of Ayer, Harvard, Lancaster, and Shirley formed the Joint Boards of Selectman to deal with issues associated with closing and planning the reuse of Fort Devens, located in Ayer. The 9,500 acre military base has seven million square-feet of building space and housing for over 7,000 people. The Joint Boards ensures that each town will act as a unified regional entity to resolve all challenges the base closing brings to the region. The municipal administrators of Harvard, Ayer, and Shirley coordinate all actions. The Joint Boards formed a partnership with the state to receive assistance in financial solutions, the planning process, and the development of a model for the governance of the former base site. Federal grants, state matching funds, local funds, and volunteer contributions help fund this program. This effort won first place in the 1996 Kenneth E. Pickard Innovations Awards sponsored by the Massachusetts Municipal Association for cities with a population of between 20,000 and under.

---

**BEST Communication Program  
Bastrop, Elgin and Smithville, Texas**

For more information, contact: Teresa Valdez, City Secretary  
tvaldez@cityofbastrop.org  
(512) 321-3941 or 321-4520

The BEST Communication Program promotes communication among the cities of Bastrop, Elgin, and Smithville. Once a month elected officials and staff professionals from the cities, school districts, and county gather to collaborate and promote communication. Participants share assets, discuss challenges, and highlight each city's successes. The program also provides an opportunity to build partnerships. The program has more than 14 ongoing, collaborative projects. BEST allows all three cities to save money and provides benefits to approximately 75,000 citizens of Bastrop County. This program won a 2005 Texas Municipal League Municipal Excellence Award in Communications for populations under 25,000.

---

**One Voice Initiative  
Fresno and Fresno County, California**

For more information contact: Jeanette Ishii  
jishii@co.fresno.ca.us  
(559) 488-1710

The One Voice Initiative brings together the governments of Fresno County's 15 cities as well as county officials and business leaders. The group agrees on unified goals and actions to be taken by the county and cities to enhance transportation, economic development, and education. After reaching a consensus on specific projects for the county to pursue, the city leaders lobby their state and federal governments for assistance to remedy their problems. Because they speak with a unified voice and represent more than one jurisdiction, it is more likely that they can obtain the help they need. Members of the group travel to Sacramento and Washington to explain their priorities to their legislators.

---

**Public Safety and Emergency Services**  
**Kansas City, Missouri and member cities of the Mid-America Regional Council**

For more information, contact: Erin Lynch, Emergency Services Manager  
elynych@marc.org  
(816) 474-4240

The Mid-America Regional Council, a partnership of cities in the Kansas City area with a broad agenda also coordinates emergency response operations in the bi-state region. Networks for 911 dispatchers, top officials, and ambulances and emergency rooms connect jurisdictions across state lines. When a city in the region receives federal or state funds for emergency operations, it consults the Council to determine what purchases or services would best benefit the entire region. Some members develop expert rescue teams or purchase equipment with excess capacity with the intention of sharing their resources and abilities with the larger region. By pooling their resources, the council members save money and increase their regional capacity to respond to a wide variety of possible disasters.

---

**Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC)**  
**Seattle, Washington and surrounding area**

For more information, contact: Rick Olson, Director, Government Relations and Communications  
(206) 464-7090

Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) administers the Central Puget Sound's regional growth management through consensus-building. Although the program has no direct control over regional infrastructure systems, it can impose financial sanctions on jurisdictions who fail to comply with the regional transportation plan. PSRC derives much of its authority from an Inter-local Agreement signed by member governments. This document created the organization and outlined its major functions which include maintaining an updated regional growth strategy, developing a regional database, and providing technical assistance to local governments. PSRC serves as the federally-designated agency in charge of regional transportation systems for four counties and 72 municipalities and reviews each jurisdiction's local comprehensive growth plans. Although a state law passed in 1990 empowers the regional council to withhold federal transportation funds, PSRC has successfully promoted consistency in a non-confrontational manner.

---

**Annual Joint Meeting of Elected Officials**  
**South Sioux City and Dakota County, Nebraska**

For more information, contact: Lance Hedquist, City Administrator  
[lhedquist@southsiouxcity.org](mailto:lhedquist@southsiouxcity.org)  
(402) 494-7517

The annual joint meeting of elected officials from South Sioux City, Dakota City, the local school district, and Dakota County provides a venue for open discussions, and encourages new ideas for cooperation, consolidation of services, improved use of equipment, better use of public employees' skills, and numerous other cost-saving measures. Through intergovernmental and public-private cooperation, programs are developed to address several public concerns like reduction in property taxes, better public information, and improved government efficiency. Intergovernmental and public-private programs make it possible to save taxpayer dollars by jointly purchasing products and by combining city, county, and school services and staff. Such projects reduce costs and reduce property taxes, and increase efficiency. This program was a 2001 Howland Awards Silver Winner in the Under 50,000 population category.

---

City Practices Briefs contain examples from NLC's City Practices database, available at [www.nlc.org](http://www.nlc.org). Series editors: Bruce Calvin and Larry Foxman. For more information contact the NLC Municipal Reference Service at (202) 626-3130 or email [mrs@nlc.org](mailto:mrs@nlc.org).