

## Getting in Touch

The Office of Local Government is a unit of Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service. For information about any Extension Program, contact your county Extension office.

### Office of Local Government

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### Information and Referral Service (785) 532-7987

Call our information and referral line to speak with our referral assistant or to leave a request. We strive to respond to inquiries with detailed recommendations and the correct referrals within 2 to 3 working days.

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for Life”*



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**Kansas State University  
Agricultural Experiment Station and  
Cooperative Extension Service**

MF2282

August 1997

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MS8-97—3.5



# A Program Targeting the Needs of Local Governments in Kansas



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

## Assistance to Communities

Cities and counties in Kansas are facing new economic and political realities. While a few regional cities are experiencing strong economic and population growth, many smaller communities struggle to maintain their population and economic base. Meanwhile, political trends suggest shifting new public service responsibilities from the federal government to state and local governments.

K-State Research and Extension is anticipating an increasing demand for services targeting the needs of cities and counties through the creation of the Office of Local Government. The office represents a major commitment of K-State Research and Extension time and resources to meet the needs of local government. The Office of Local Government focuses its efforts in two broad areas:

- Local Economic Development Programs
- City and County Government Public Services

In responding to needs related to local economic development and public service provision, the Office of Local Government provides four types of services:

- Information and Referral
- Educational Outreach
- Technical Assistance
- Applied Research

## Information and Referral

The Office of Local Government maintains a telephone information and referral service. Information and referrals are available to local elected and appointed officials, county Extension agents, and county Extension Councils in areas related to local economic development and local government.

This service is the doorway to the many programs and technical assistance services available to communities from K-State. If the needed expertise does not exist at K-State, our information

specialist will make the appropriate referral. We are more than an information clearing-house. We do the research necessary to make the connection between the local need and the program or specialist who can help officials resolve that need.

Our information and referral service also maintains a comprehensive resource library specializing in financial assistance for public services, economic development, and other funding opportunities available to municipalities. Our information and referral specialist can be reached at (785) 532-7987.

## Responding to Community Needs in Kansas

Kansas cities and counties are facing new and continuing challenges. The need to create new economic opportunities and expand the tax base is a continuing problem for most communities. Of even greater concern is the revolution in the way responsibilities for public service provision are being redistributed among government units.

K-State Research and Extension's Office of Local Government is developing programs and strategies to help local governments in Kansas successfully cope with these new realities. Assistance services are available to meet local officials' information needs: a telephone research and referral service, outreach education programs, and detailed technical studies. In most cases, services are offered without charge through the county Extension office.

### Local Economic Development

Local economic development remains a concern in most Kansas communities. In some communities, economic growth is strong. The need in these communities may be to manage growth, minimize the negative impacts associated with growth, or to improve the quality of the development that occurs. In other communities, the problem is a lack of new economic opportunity or maintaining the economic base that currently exists.

In both cases, the challenge is to maintain local quality of life. Local officials and development organizations can benefit from the information resources of the university in areas related to economic development finance; development strategies; community economic analysis; and social, economic, and fiscal impacts.

### Local Government Public Service Provision

The trend toward the shifting of public service responsibility to state and local governments is clear. Welfare reform represents the leading edge of what may be a revolution in the way we govern ourselves. The challenges associated with local government assuming new responsibilities are formidable: designing efficient and effective local programs as well as dealing with the indirect problems that are often associated with change.

In some cases, it may be necessary to look at creative solutions such as interlocal collaboration. Local officials will need information related to fiscal impacts; revenue and expenditure trends and projections; public service efficiency; and evaluating structural alternatives in the organization and delivery of public services.

## Educational Outreach

As part of K-State's Research and Extension program, the Office of Local Government has a statewide educational outreach mission. Our approach to educational programming is issue based and flexible. As the problems faced by local officials change over time, so will our educational program focus. It may relate to solid waste management, local juvenile adjudication, or welfare reform.

The Office of Local Government will assemble a task force of specialists representing needed expertise for the purpose of developing high quality information resources for local government. These initiatives represent a cooperative effort among Kansas universities, public agencies, and professional organizations for the purpose of providing the best information possible to local officials related to the issues of current concern.

## Applied Research

The Office of Local Government maintains an active program of applied research related to matters of local economic development and local government in Kansas. Information resources are created in the form of computerized data bases, customized local economic models, advanced modeling systems, and other special projects designed to meet the special information needs of local governments. Student assistance and special studies are available through this service.

## Technical Assistance

To make the best decisions possible, local officials need accurate and reliable technical information. Located in the Department of Agricultural Economics at K-State, the Office of Local Government provides a wide variety of economic and technical analysis services.

In support of community economic development programs, local officials can obtain local market analyses, economic base studies, economic and fiscal impact analyses, industrial targeting studies, and other types of studies to help understand local trends and anticipate the impacts of local decisions and economic events.

In support of local decision-making related to public services, population studies, tax trend analyses, fiscal impact analyses, local revenue and expenditure studies, and public service efficiency studies can be provided.

