



# TRANSFORMING OHIO FOR GROWTH

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ENERGY. MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY.

## Local Government

### **THE MANAGEMENT EFFICIENCY PLAN: New Cost-Saving Tools for Local Governments and Schools**

Job creation remains Ohio's top priority. Though Ohio's unemployment rate has dropped from 9.0 to 7.7 percent since January 2011, too many Ohioans are still unemployed. We're making progress but Ohio still has a lot of work to do. To further efforts to recreate a jobs-friendly climate in Ohio—efforts that started last year with his Jobs Budget and other policies—Gov. John Kasich initiated a comprehensive review of state government management, operations and policies in key areas.

Referring to this process as the Mid-Biennium Review (MBR), because it came half-way through Ohio's two-year budget cycle, Gov. Kasich worked with his cabinet and staff to develop new strategies that improve the management of Ohio's government agencies and health systems, improve Ohio's education and workforce development efforts, and improve Ohioans' access to low-cost, reliable energy.

Over the past several months, local government officials were encouraged to offer their ideas to improve government efficiency and identify areas for cost savings. Below is an overview of items proposed in the Management Efficiency Plan (MEP) that would act on many of these suggested solutions. These additional tools will allow Ohio's local governments and schools to continue the historic transformation of the way they provide services which began last year in the governor's Jobs Budget.

### **BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS TO LOCAL SHARED SERVICES**

The Jobs Budget clarified and expanded state laws governing the ways local governments can engage in—and save their taxpayers' money through—shared services. The MEP continues to challenge the status quo by providing additional tools for local governments and schools and further removing barriers that stand in the way of saving Ohioans' tax dollars through collaboration between local governments. Highlights include:

- The state will provide an online clearinghouse of information, sample materials and tools for shared services. Through the use of this portal, local officials will have one stop access to the latest information about how they can increase their savings through collaboration.
- Ohio will create a new online portal through which schools and local governments can engage in joint purchasing in order to lower their costs for many services and products that they currently must pay for individually.
- Ohio school systems will be allowed to save funds by allowing treasurers to also function as business managers.
- Local health departments will be able to go outside their traditional borders to share or contract with staff.
- County auditors will be permitted to serve as fiscal agents for other offices and to share employees across county lines.

### **ELIMINATING MANDATES AND INCREASING FLEXIBILITY TO REDUCE COSTS AND IMPROVE SERVICES**

Multiple layers of state-imposed rules and regulations that have been allowed to build up overtime without careful scrutiny—and which are now often obsolete, redundant or counterproductive—drive up the cost of local government, most often without benefit to taxpayers. Working with local government officials, the governor's staff identified reforms to help reduce or eliminate many of these wasteful mandates, freeing local governments and schools to operate more efficiently and with lower costs. Highlights include:

- Annual reports listing stolen property which local governments are required to create are eliminated. In the age of rapid online access to information, the annual reports were no longer timely, were excessively bureaucratic and provided no value.
- Competitive bid limits for cities and villages will be increased to \$50,000 so they can more readily support businesses in their own communities.
- Background-check procedures will be made more uniform and report-filing requirements will be simplified to lessen the administrative burden on local schools and Boards of Developmental Disability.

**USING 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY TECHNOLOGY TO STREAMLINE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMS**

While e-commerce and new methods of transmitting and sharing information have transformed businesses worldwide, Ohio’s local governments have too often been restricted from using these same technologies and instead are burdened with decades-old processes. The MEP allows local governments to use internet tools and other 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies to provide immediate savings and benefits for taxpayers. Highlights include:

- A new a Public Defender Information Network will be created. The new network will increase efficiencies in assigning, evaluating and paying public defenders saving local government time and money.
- The use of more internet publishing to replace or augment traditional printing.
- The authority for local governments to use a new cost-saving, statewide public notice website will be clarified.
- Online training for local law enforcement will be expanded.

**BOTTOM LINE:** Community leaders in Ohio, spurred by economic recession and technological advances, increasingly see the value of shared services and resources as a way of reducing costs, improving services and increasing efficiencies. Expanding on tools provided to local governments and schools by his ground-breaking Jobs Budget in 2011, Governor Kasich’s MBR offers local leaders new and enhanced opportunities for cost-saving collaboration across traditional boundaries.

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