

# 2015-16 Municipal Consolidation & Shared Services Grant Application Now Available

**Poughkeepsie...** The Dutchess County Department of Planning & Development has announced the release of the 2015-16 Dutchess County Municipal Consolidation & Shared Services Grant application. The Municipal Consolidation & Shared Services Grant Program (MCSSGP) incentivizes municipal projects that reduce the total cost of local government through the consolidation of services, creation of shared services, elimination of an entire government entity, establishment of the regional delivery of services, and/or increased efficiencies.

Dutchess County is the first county in New York State to implement a municipal consolidation and shared services grant program which awards municipalities for creating efficiencies and cost savings that reduce the financial burden on taxpayers. Since its inception, the MCSSGP has resulted in cost-savings initiatives such as a web-based (cloud) permitting, code enforcement, planning and zoning collaboration software system shared among 12 municipalities; the creation of shared assessor services between two towns; plans to consolidate two fire districts; and the sharing of highway equipment between four towns; among others.

Reducing the cost of government through consolidation and shared services is more important than ever. Starting in 2016, New York State property taxpayers will be eligible to receive a property tax rebate check only if their municipality can demonstrate 1% savings through consolidation or shared services efforts, in addition to remaining under the property tax cap.

County Executive Marc Molinaro said, "Dutchess County has taken the lead in New York State with our Municipal Consolidation & Shared Services Grant Program. For the past two years, the County has seen a concerted effort by local municipalities and government entities to implement projects that help make government smaller, smarter and more effective. We are impressed with the shared services and consolidation projects that have come out of this program, and we look forward to future projects that cut costs and provide needed relief to our taxpayers."

In 2015, the main priority of the County is to fund projects that dissolve a division, layer or jurisdiction of government. Projects that produce shared services and consolidation will be considered but special focus will be placed on projects that create savings for taxpayers as a result of the elimination of an entire government entity. The grant program defines a government entity as an agency that has taxing authority. The County will accept applications from special districts, including fire and library districts.

The County will consider applications from municipalities and local government entities that result in:

- Dissolution of a Layer of Government: A governmental entity dissolves itself and merges operations with another governmental entity.
- Consolidation of Services: Functional consolidation is when one local government completely provides a service or function for another local government that will no longer engage in that service or function.

- Shared Services: Shared services are the joint provision, performance or delivery of a service, facility, or activity by two or more local government entities that each may do separately.
- Regional Delivery of Services: Local governments may determine that delivery of services on a regional basis is the most cost-effective method of providing services. To accomplish this, local government entities may either enter into joint agreements or transfer the service to a county or regional entity.
- Other Efficiency Improvements: Activities that will provide significant long-term savings to one or more municipalities. Including training for programs and services that cross jurisdictional boundaries, up to 50% of these costs are eligible.
- Municipal Consolidation Planning and/or Implementation: Planning and evaluation that may result in implementation of one of the above categories: Dissolution, Consolidation, Shared Services, Resource Delivery, and Efficiency.

Additionally, as part of this year's application process, the County is extending funding opportunities through the MCSSGP to municipalities who implement Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) within their police departments. If awarded funding, the County will reimburse up to 50% of the cost to the applicant for this training. The Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council has placed special focus on diversion efforts through the use of CIT training, as part of the Dutchess County Justice & Transition Center project. The goal is to reduce incarceration by training local law enforcement on how to appropriately and successfully interact with individuals living with mental illnesses.

The Municipal Consolidation & Shared Services Grant Program is administered on an October 1st to September 30<sup>th</sup> program year under the direction of the Department of Planning & Development. Applications are reviewed from June to August by the Community Development Advisory Committee (CDAC), a committee comprised of members of the local nonprofit community as well as county and municipal officials. The CDAC'S funding recommendations are then submitted to the County Executive for final approval. Award announcements are expected in September.

"The Municipal Consolidation & Shared Services Grant Program is unique in the sense that it provides municipalities and government entities the opportunity to apply for funding that will not only provide direct benefit to their town or city, but it also provides savings to collaborating entities and taxpayers within that municipality. The first cycle of the grant project year has produced significant cost savings and efficiencies for municipalities, and we have seen the same results for projects awarded last year through the grant program," said Commissioner of Planning & Development Eoin Wrafter.

Applications are due to the Department of Planning & Development by June 19<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m. The application can be found online at <http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Planning/22268.htm>. Application materials should be sent as an attachment to [communitygrants@dutchessny.gov](mailto:communitygrants@dutchessny.gov).

A grant orientation meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 13<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. at the Department of Planning & Development Offices, located at 27 High Street, Poughkeepsie. Attendance at the orientation is strongly recommended for municipalities applying for grant funding. Those interested in

attending the orientation should RSVP by May 8<sup>th</sup> to [communitygrants@dutchessny.gov](mailto:communitygrants@dutchessny.gov) or [\(845\) 486-3600](tel:(845)486-3600).

For more information about the Municipal Consolidation & Shared Services Grant Program and application requirements, visit:

<http://www.co.dutchess.ny.us/CountyGov/Departments/Planning/22268.htm>.

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