

Chapter 1 Introduction

Local governments around California are making impressive strides to cooperate with each other to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of delivering government services. While each governmental entity in the state provides unique services to its constituents, the long range and daily operations of governments with similar geographic boundaries intersect in many ways, including:

- The facilities that are used;
- The programs that are delivered;
- The land use plans they make;
- The administrative procedures that they use.

Benefits of Cooperation

Local governments throughout the State of California are proving to themselves and their communities the benefits of cooperation.

- Stanislaus County and the City of Modesto have built a joint government service center, with retail on street level and space for other tenants. They share conference and meeting rooms, production facilities, and even the Council Chamber. Estimated savings are more than \$100 million.
- The City of Sonora redeveloped a vacated utility center for use as a City public works yard, high school parking lot and community college high-tech educational facility.
- Fresno and Clovis Unified School Districts renovated an industrial factory to create the Center for Advanced Research and Technology using Qualified Zone Academy Bonds. The Districts will save \$11 million over the next 12 years in interest payments by using the bonds.
- The City of Pasadena and the Pasadena Unified School District have agreed to enter into agreements to consolidate planning and administrative functions including Workers' Compensation claims administration, real estate and advanced planning services, fuel purchasing, and vehicle storage.

“Whenever schools and local governments or community groups can join forces to consolidate a service, provide a better program for less money, or cost-share in some resource, whether facilities or programs, it makes a great opportunity to demonstrate cost-efficiency to private business and taxpayers.”

-Kathy Mission,
Clovis City Manager

- The City of Sacramento, Sacramento County, the Grant School District, and many other public and non-profit organizations are partners in the Mutual Assistance Network of Del Paso Heights, a community development corporation that promotes family self-sufficiency and the economic revitalization of the Del Paso Heights neighborhood.
- Livermore, Livermore Valley Unified School District and the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District have issued a joint bond to construct a new City library, renovate an existing library, construct a Community Center and repair and maintain existing school facilities. The bond replaces an existing school district bond and will, because of new growth in the area, have the effect of reducing the tax rate.
- The City of Claremont and the Claremont Unified School District, along with multiple other partners have implemented a number of youth-oriented programs which have resulted in an increase in after school activity participation, a decrease in teenage drinking, a decrease in truancy and a decrease in youth-related crimes.

The main lesson from this workbook can be captured in one idea:

Good relationships between key policymakers and staff of intersecting local governments are the key to successful partnerships.

Sometimes the driving motive is a funding shortage, sometimes it is a compelling community problem, other times it is just public servants who are accustomed to cooperative endeavors because that is the culture of their entire organization. The beneficiaries are the citizens. The quality of services is rising, the cost of services is declining, and citizen trust in and support for their governments is solidified.

The purpose of this workbook is to help local governments throughout California identify and realize the full range of benefits from cooperation. It sounds so simple, and in some ways it is. The main lesson from this entire book can be captured in one idea: ***Good relationships between key policymakers and staff of intersecting local governments are the key to successful partnerships.***

But mining the full potential of cooperative initiatives is a challenge. Within the context of everyone's busy worlds, a large number of people, all doing their best to fulfill the unique mission of their organization, must: get to know each other; find their common interests; identify opportunities; conduct technical analysis to figure out what will work and what won't; work with attorneys on local and

state legal issues; and involve citizens throughout the process in order to make sure the community understands and supports whatever tangible result all the cooperation will ultimately create.

Workbook Purpose

This workbook is intended to help provide:

- ***Inspiration*** – through documenting the benefits of cooperative activities;
- ***Hope*** – through examples of those who have tried and succeeded;
- ***Knowledge*** – through lessons learned by practitioners about what methods work well and not so well; and
- ***Resources*** to help you start and stay the course – through methods, exercises, materials, and people who can help you succeed.

Workbook Content

✓ Chapter II – Case Studies

We feature six teams of local government partners who have distinguished themselves by the comprehensive and innovative nature of their cooperative activities. In each case they have achieved a number of successes and cooperation has become integral to their organizations ways of life. For each case study you will learn:

- What they did,
- How they did it,
- Key lessons learned along the way, and
- Who to contact for more information.

✓ Chapter III – Model Cooperative Process

We have listened to those who are succeeding in California, reviewed the literature in this field, and developed a simple four-step process to help you identify and execute cooperative projects. Each of the steps includes:

- A rationale,
- Specific tasks,
- Tips for success,
- Examples from California local governments, and
- Work sheets.

This process is structured to be used by those who want to:

- Pursue a specific cooperative activity;
- Comprehensively explore opportunities for cooperation and systematically prioritize cooperative opportunities; and
- Review their current cooperative activities and identify ways to refine and enhance them.

✓ Chapter IV – Resources

We have provided an example of a master joint agreement and extra exercise forms for duplication.