**Fiscal Facts: Collaboration among municipalities could enhance operations, control costs**

Sharing or consolidating certain municipal functions may help local governments improve public services and possibly save costs, as aging populations, advances in technology, and economic growth increase demands for these services at a time of stagnant state revenues.

Findings from a recent Wisconsin Policy Forum report, commissioned for seven Jefferson County communities, may have implications for local governments across Wisconsin, some of which operate under similar constraints.

The opportunities highlighted all involve core services that are relatively consistent across municipalities. They also involve activities that do not logically end at municipal borders, such as fire, public safety dispatch operations, public works, and police (the Forum has also initiated a separate service sharing analysis of the county’s Emergency Medical Services).

These services tend to be among the most costly areas in municipal government, requiring expensive and possibly duplicative equipment purchases; the services themselves may also be unnecessarily redundant and may provide cost reductions through service sharing or consolidation, or collaboration on staff recruitment, training, and retention.

The intent of the Forum’s broad review of municipal services was to provide initial guidance for local officials in the Jefferson County region. The purpose was not to make recommendations, but to provide fiscal and program analysis that would help officials and citizens themselves decide whether further research or action is warranted.

*This information is a service of the Wisconsin Policy Forum, the state’s leading resource for nonpartisan state and local government research and civic education. Learn more at wispolicyforum.org.*