



1. Why did The Ohio Township Association (OTA) decide to conduct an analysis on local government spending?

The analysis was spurred by the difficult financial situation facing both Ohio and the nation, which has led to a continued search for ways to reduce the cost of government spending. Some people believe that forced government consolidation would reduce expenditures and local taxes. Others believe that smaller governments are more accessible and responsive and can cost less.

2. What is the main takeaway from the report findings?

After extensive analysis of local government spending in Ohio, the OTA found that smaller governments spend less, tend to borrow less per capita and have lower taxes per capita than larger entities.

3. What information was used to conduct the analysis?

The analysis was conducted using data from the Auditor of the State.

4. What are some of the key findings from the report specifically about townships?

The report indicates that Ohio's townships are one of the state's most efficient forms of government. Key findings include:

- Townships are Ohio's fastest growing government segment. In fact, virtually all of Ohio's population growth between 2000 and 2010 was in townships.
- Ohio's townships provide virtually the same services as cities and villages, and do so in their own exclusive geographic service areas. Further, townships are responsible for the largest share of the state's roadways.
- Townships represent only 11 percent of local government spending, yet they have 35 percent of the state's population.
- Townships spend less per capita and have less per capita debt service payments than villages and cities in the same population category.
- Townships conduct financial affairs responsibly, rarely utilizing Ohio's Local Government Fiscal Distress Program.

5. Why does the report indicate that smaller government, which is closer to the people, is better for Ohio?

Smaller government is best for Ohio because the report findings clearly show that these entities spend less and are more accessible to residents.

6. What do the findings indicate about larger and consolidated governments?

The report indicates that as governments are forced to consolidate, costs are driven by “leveling up” of labor costs and service levels to match the more expensive consolidating jurisdiction. Larger governments are less accessible because residents cannot easily and quickly reach elected officials or administrators with sufficient authority to act.

7. What does the report conclude about what type of government is best for Ohio to stay competitive?

A review of metropolitan areas in the Midwest and east indicated that greater local government decentralization (smaller governments) is associated with greater employment growth than in areas with more local government concentration.

8. How do townships compare to other small government entities (i.e., municipalities, villages, cities, etc.) in terms of spending and access?

Ohio townships provide similar essential services to unincorporated areas outside cities and villages, such as police protection, fire protection, emergency medical services, waste management, senior centers, parks and recreation, street lighting, zoning, roads and cemetery maintenance. Yet, Townships represent a smaller share of local government spending than their population share. Townships only account for 11 percent of local general purpose government spending (excluding counties), yet have 35 percent of the state’s population.

9. Why should these findings matter to the residents of Ohio?

The report clearly shows that forcing local government consolidations would be a step in the wrong direction. Smaller governments, which are closer to people, are better for Ohio.

10. How do these findings compare to the value of small government entities in other states that are similar in size and structure to Ohio?

Generally the academic research and students in other states indicate that smaller governments spend less per capita and that forced consolidations do no result in cost savings.