

October 11, 2019

TO: Toni Henneman, Research Analyst, MT Legislative Services
FROM: Dan Clark, Director, MSU Extension Local Government Center
RE: Local Government Center's legislative history, current operations and future opportunities
Date: October 11, 2019

I am pleased to respond to your request for additional information concerning MSU Extension Local Government Center funding and the services it provides across the state of Montana to locally elected and appointed officials. The following background may be useful to you.

History

The Local Government Center (LGC) was created in 1985 to assist counties and municipalities with the Voter Review process whereby citizens vote to evaluate and change local government's operations. The 6th constitutionally required Voter Review process begins November 2024 and concludes in 2026.

In 1993, the Montana State Legislature formally established the LGC's mission in the Montana Code Annotated: *The Center's purpose is to strengthen the capacities of Montana's local governmental units to deliver essential services efficiently and to provide training, technical assistance, and research to local officials* (MCA 20-25-237).

The LGC's mission is consistent with the outreach and engagement mission of MSU Extension and extends to all municipalities and counties across Montana. It provides certification, training, research, and technical assistance to more than 7,000 locally elected and appointed public officials annually.

Prior to 2009 the LGC was located in the Department of Political Science, College of Letters and Science at Montana State University. Because of budget reductions in 2008-09 the college decided it could no longer fund the LGC through base budgets and student tuition and requested that MSU Extension become the administrative unit to provide funding and oversight.

LGC Funding History

MSU Extension requested funding from the 2009 Legislature to support the Local Government Center. The Legislature appropriated \$200,000/biennium one-time-only funds from Federal stimulus resources.

No funds were appropriated to the Local Government Center during the 2011 legislative session. MSU President Cruzado allocated one-time-only University resources to support the Center during the 2012/13 biennium.

During the 2013 State Legislative Session, the LGC requested \$200,000 annually to be added to Extension's base funding. However, the amendment in the Senate appropriating the full requested amount lost in tie vote resulting in the LGC receiving \$100,000 for the biennium as one-time-only funds.

The 2015 Legislature approved a \$180,000 appropriation to MSU Extensions base funding to support operations for the Local Government Center.

**Local Government
Center**

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The Center has been entrepreneurial in finding creative short-term solutions to funding shortfalls. This often requires accepting contracts with organizations outside of the Center's mission. This, however, contributes to the unsustainable work conditions for Center staff and detracts from the Center's ability to meet its mission.

Today, the Center operates with 3.45 FTE and a total annual operating budget of \$301,345. Contributions to the annual budget include

- 53% or \$161,345 from the Legislature,
- 23% or \$70,000 from MSU Extension and
- 23% or \$70,000 from the local governments in the form of fee for service.

The Legislature's contributions to the LGC budget currently covers the Director and the full-time Associate Training Specialist and majority of the Program Manager salaries. The funding contribution for the remaining 0.6 FTE comes from MSU Extension and revenue generated from the LGC fees.

Demand for Services by Montana Local Governments

The Local Government Center accomplishes phenomenal outcomes and impacts in spite of its limited staff and resources. The LGC's success is primarily due to the staff's commitment to the Center's mission and their willingness to give their discretionary effort to serve the local governments of Montana. As outlined on the attached chart of Biennium FY 2017-19 Training and Facilitation Services, in 24 months the LGC delivered 212 individual workshops, trainings or facilitated work sessions to 7,489 local government officials and community members. As Eric Bryson, Executive Director for MACo explained during public comment at the September committee meeting, the impact of the Center is dependent on the 1 or 2 staff member's willingness to be on the road, year round, providing training statewide to meet a growing demand for support. The pace and schedule makes the Center's impact and effectiveness as a resource to local government vulnerable and unsustainable. In addition to the in-person training the Center staff spend approximately 1,400 hours per biennium providing technical assistance support to local governments. Currently, the Center manages and monitors nine listservs for various local government officials. These listserv user groups include mayors, municipal clerks, clerks of district court, clerk and recorders, election administrators, city managers, municipal human resource managers, clerks of limited jurisdiction and judges of limited jurisdiction. The staff respond to hundreds of technical assistance questions via email and phone calls each year.

Another concern shared by the Center staff is the fee for service model. Although, it is proven that people will value what they pay for, there are some jurisdictions that cannot afford the LGC's modest fees and, therefore, cannot benefit from the many training options. These cities, counties, water, sewer and fire districts could benefit from accessing the Center's many governance and professional development training programs, but are unable to justify the expense when resources are so scarce.

One other challenge the Center faces is staff burnout. At some point, regardless of impact and professional satisfaction gained from working with local governments, LGC staff cannot sustain the level of training and travel that yield the current impact to local governments.

Finally, the demand for training and technical assistance has been increasing year over year and overshadows the Center's ability to meet its research mission. At this point the staff struggle to maintain its existing portfolio of research projects and publications. The Center has dropped its semiannual Montana Policy Review due to its focus on more immediate and urgent needs of local governments and the amount of time it takes to create the research and analysis.

The Center spends a majority of its time reacting to immediate challenges and crises and has little time to position itself to be proactive and provide intentional training and leadership development to public officials. Additional staff will allow the Center to meet existing demand and be more strategic in program development and delivery statewide.

FY2017-19 Activity

From July 2017 to June 2019, the Center provided 212 trainings with 7,489 participants. Training topics include: MT code of ethics, good governance, board leadership, meeting management, practical leadership,

management development, conflict management, roles and responsibilities, citizen's right to know and participate, strategic planning and meeting facilitation.

In Biennium FY 17-19, the Center provided at least one training in each of the following communities:

Anaconda, Arlee, Baker, Big Sky, Big Timber, Bigfork, Billings, Bozeman, Butte, Chester, Choteau, Colombia Falls, Colstrip, Conrad, Condon, Culbertson, Darby, Deer Lodge, East Helena, Ekalaka, Ennis, Eureka, Forsyth, Gardiner, Glasgow, Great Falls, Hamilton, Harlowton, Helena, Joliet, Kalispell, Lewistown, Libby, Lincoln, Livingston, Malta, Miles City, Missoula, Paradise, Plentywood, Red Lodge, Ryegate, Scobey, Shelby, Sidney, Stevensville, Three Forks, Thompson Falls, Townsend, Troy, Valier, Virginia City, West Yellowstone, Whitefish, and Whitehall.

Ideal Organizational Structure Based on Historical Demand

The size of the Local Government Center has fluctuated based on available funding. However, if the Center were to meet current demand for service and its three part mission of training, technical assistance and research, it would need additional capacity and resources. To satisfy the existing demand for services, maintain a modest research agenda and support a Graduate Student Research Assistant, the Center would need to grow from its current 3.45 FTE to 9 FTE. The positions highlighted in bold are currently filled by staff.

- **Center Director** (1.0 FTE) – Dan Clark, 2008 to present
- Associate Director (1.0 FTE) – Vacant since February 2018 due burnout caused by funding model
- **Associate Training Specialist** (1.0 FTE) – Ashley Kent, 2017 to present, service to Center since 2014
- **Associate Training Specialist** (.45 FTE) – Tara Mastel, 2017 to present. Reduced FTE due to funding. Tara's salary is covered with funds generated through the fee-for-service funds of the Center.
- Associate Training Specialist (1.0 FTE) – Vacant due to funding
- Associate Training Specialist (1.0 FTE) – Vacant due to funding
- Policy and Research Associate Specialist (1.0 FTE) – 1.0 FTE. Vacant due to funding
- Graduate Student Research Assistant – Vacant due to funding
- **Program Manager** (1.0 FTE) – Jane McDonald, 2018
- Admin Associate II (.5 FTE) – Vacant due to a lack of funding

Any additional appropriations to the Local Government Center from the legislature will be invested after consultation with the Center's advisory committee to determine the greatest use for the most impact to the State.

The Local Government Center has performed a valuable service to the state of Montana for over 34 years and its continued success is contingent upon additional investment from the legislature. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Dan Clark
Director
Local Government Center
Montana State University Extension

Enclosure: MSU Extension Local Government Center Biennium FY 2017-19 Training and Facilitation Services October 2019

MSU Extension Local Government Center
Biennium FY 2017-19 Training and Facilitation Services
October 2019

Local Government Center's Service Fees

Standard trainings (single facilitator)	Custom trainings (single facilitator)
Half-day (up to 4 hours) \$500 + materials + travel expenses	Half-day (up to 4 hours) \$900 + materials + travel expenses
Full-day (up to 8 hours) \$900 + materials + travel expenses	Full-day (up to 8 hours) \$1,200 + materials + travel expenses

		Number of Workshop	Number of Participants
Capacity Building (Standard Training)	Cost	67	1,795
Conflict Management	\$500 + travel		
Customer Service	\$500 + travel		
Daring Leadership	\$500 + travel		
Emotional Intelligence	\$500 + travel		
Employee Management	\$500 + travel		
Employee Motivation	\$500 + travel		
Ethics/Nepotism	\$500 + travel		
Highly Effective Teams	\$500 + travel		
Leadership Challenge Workshop	\$500 + travel		
Multi-Generational Workplace	\$500 + travel		
Navigating Difficult Conversations	\$500 + travel		
Negotiation Styles	\$500 + travel		
Real Colors	\$500 + \$10/booklet + travel		
Real Colors Leadership	\$500 + travel		
Real Colors Teams	\$500 + travel		
Team Building	\$500 + travel		
The Futures Game	\$500 + travel		
Website Education Program	\$500		
Workplace Bullying	\$500 + travel		
Annual and Curriculum-Based		35	1,531
Clerks of District Court	\$35/person/day		
County Officials Program	\$2,500 + travel		
Elected Officials Program	\$180/person		
Executive Academy	\$500 + travel		
Municipal Institute	\$35/person/day		
Municipal Summits	\$1,000/summit paid by MMIA		

		Number of Workshop	Number of Participants
Facilitation		42	2,007
Strategic Planning	\$2,100 + travel (based on 1.5 days)		
Candidate Forum Moderation	\$500 + travel (0.5 day)		
Civic Dialogue	\$500 + travel (0.5 day)		
Community Engagement	\$900 + travel (1 day)		
Employee Dispute Mediation	\$900 + travel (1 day)		
Interlocal Agreements	\$900 + travel (1 day)		
Participatory-Based Budgeting	\$2,100 + travel (based on 1.5 days)		
Governance (Standard Training)		62	2028
Board Training	\$500 + travel		
By-Laws	\$500 + travel		
Closed Meetings	\$500 + travel		
County and Municipal Trainings	\$500 + travel		
Course, Scope, & Liability	\$500 + travel		
Effective Meetings	\$500 + travel		
Ethics/Nepotism	\$500 + travel		
Forms of Government	\$500 + travel		
Fundamentals of Montana Municipal Government (Online)	\$25/person		
Good Governance	\$500 + travel		
Meeting Notice	\$500 + travel		
Montana Statutes	\$500 + travel		
Open Meetings	\$500 + travel		
Parliamentary Procedure	\$500 + travel		
Public Participation	\$500 + travel		
Public Records	\$500 + travel		
Roles & Responsibilities	\$500 + travel		
Special Districts	\$500 + travel		
Voter Review	\$500 + travel		
Specialized Workshops		6	128
Athenian Dialogue	\$900 + travel (1 day)		
Lead Local	\$1,200 + travel (1.25 days)		
Mental Health First Aid (option for focus on first responders)	\$750 + materials + travel (1 day)		
Customized Training Upon Request	Dependant on needs		
Total Counts	Trainings:	212	
	Participants:	7,489	