

EMPIRE CENTER

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT STREAMLINING OPTIONS HIGHLIGHTED IN EMPIRE CENTER REPORT

Shared services, dissolution and mergers remain viable options for taxpayers and elected officials facing challenging fiscal environments and historically high taxes, according to a report issued today by the Empire Center for Public Policy, in conjunction with the Center for Governmental Research and GovWorks Consulting.

“The streamline search: options for NY localities,” the fourth installment in the Empire Center’s Empire Ideas project, outlines cost-saving steps that can be taken by the 1,600 counties, cities, towns and villages in New York. The report illustrates how municipalities can work together to provide services, details steps residents can take to initiate a merger or dissolution and highlights the successful 2013 consolidation of the two governments in Princeton, New Jersey.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo’s proposed budget for fiscal 2015 would link a temporary state-subsidized property tax rebate to efforts by local governments to reduce costs through shared services or consolidation.

“This report highlights some of the tools available to citizens and elected officials who are looking for ways to reduce the cost of local governments while maintaining services,” said Tim Hoefler, executive director of the Empire Center. “There is no ‘one size fits all’ answer. Sharing services, merging or dissolving aren’t the only options for saving money, but they do deserve to be part of the conversation.”

Scott Sittig, associate director of the Center for Governmental Research said, “Municipal officials continue to face big fiscal challenges. And while there’s no cookie cutter solution that applies to every community, these options are important parts of the management toolkit that local governments can consider.”

Read the entire report at www.empirecenter.org.

The Empire Ideas project consists of research papers and public forums designed to promote ways elected officials, community groups and concerned taxpayers can improve the quality and cost-effectiveness of local governments and school districts.

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