

## **Strategic Plan 2012 - 2017**

### **OVERVIEW**

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service (MTAS) is an agency of the Institute for Public Service (IPS) of the University of Tennessee. IPS is a statewide, system-wide organization that fulfills the University's public service mandate by applying university expertise to community and workplace needs.

Through MTAS the towns and cities of Tennessee are supported by and have available experts dedicated solely to research, consulting and training on Tennessee municipal issues.

MTAS was established on April 15, 1949 by Tennessee Code Annotated 67-6-103 (E) to:

*in cooperation with the Tennessee Municipal League, provide for studies and research in municipal government, publications, educational conferences and attendance at such conferences and in furnishing technical, consultative and field services to municipalities in problems relating to fiscal administration, accounting, tax assessment and collection, law enforcement, improvements and public works and in any and all matters relating to municipal government.*

MTAS collaborates with agencies within IPS, the university system, the Tennessee Higher Education Commission and with all entities that work with municipal governments to meet the Mission and Vision of the agency and to improve public services in Tennessee.

### **MTAS Mission**

As an agency of the University of Tennessee and in collaboration with the Tennessee Municipal League, we leverage the resources of the university to improve the lives of the people of Tennessee with technical consulting, research and training for municipal governments.

### **MTAS Vision**

MTAS is the resource for cities, towns and state agencies on municipal services and issues in Tennessee. We provide unsurpassed technical expertise on municipal government in the state and in the nation with the quality and cost savings of a centralized source of service. We assist cities and towns with the training and information necessary to support informed decisions, and we develop valuable solutions to the issues and concerns facing these communities. We combine the talents of a passionate, experienced and well-trained staff with the resources of a major university to support excellence in municipal government.

## **Values**

### **Integrity**

Our actions and relationships are guided by an internal sense of honesty and integrity. We believe that these values are often defined by our respect, trust, inclusiveness and compassion for each other and for those we serve:

- We recognize and appreciate the uniqueness of each individual. We value the contribution made and the synergy created by different experiences and perspectives.
- We treat all individuals with dignity, we respect every opinion, and we listen to all sides.
- We encourage and develop an atmosphere of mutual trust and appreciation among employees, customers and policy-makers. We communicate effectively to improve participation and the sharing of concepts and information.

### **Commitment to Customers**

We are experts with the broadest expertise on municipal government in Tennessee, and our passion is for good and effective local government and local government employees in this state:

- Through MTAS the cities in Tennessee find technical expertise and responsiveness far beyond current needs and expectations. We recognize the importance of timeliness of response with our customers, and deliver quick and accurate assistance.
- As professionals we bring up-to-date education and experience to our service, and we deliver this service with impartiality and candor. We apply best practices and best current thinking to both problems and solutions.
- We accept the challenge of change and are committed to the future of these cities, this organization, the university and the State.

### **Professionalism**

We are problem solvers. We understand municipal issues and we promote the spirit of discovery on our staff and in our cities:

- We fund and expect professional development for staff, and we seek to be innovative, take reasonable risks, learn from our mistakes and always strive for excellence.
- We recognize the changing needs and challenges of cities, state and associations, and we are aggressively agile. We work to identify appropriate change and to reposition our skills and abilities to meet this change.

- To meet our diverse customer needs MTAS includes staff with multiple specialties, working from multiple locations. We collaborate with each other and with our cities and associations to reflect one understanding, direction and goal. Access to quality information is critical to our effective service, and we are a sharing and accessible organization.
- We value being part of a smooth and productive team. We use meaningful performance measures, and we foster networks to learn and share.
- Our work is important and should be a source of inspiration, enjoyment and satisfaction for staff and customers.

**Goal 1: DELIVER SOLUTIONS THAT ADDRESS CURRENT AND EMERGING ISSUES FACING TENNESSEE MUNICIPALITIES.**

- A. Provide quality technical assistance and advice to improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of city services.
  - 1) Increase face-to-face contact between MTAS consultants and municipal officials. (2012-2013)
  - 2) Promote the use and expansion of benchmarking and municipal performance measurement. (2012-2013)
  - 3) Distribute technical and management consultants to meet changing needs.
  - 4) Coordinate delivery of technical assistance with the TML Risk Management Pool, development districts and other partners that offer consulting and assistance to Tennessee cities and towns.
  
- B. Provide quality training and information services to develop capacity within and improve performance of Tennessee cities.
  - 1) Develop an assessment of necessary training, skills and equipment. (2012-2013)
  - 2) Evaluate MTAS information resource delivery methods and review areas that require improvement.
  - 3) Expand technical and governance training opportunities for local government boards and commissions. (2012-2013)
  - 4) Expand training and interactive discussion for local government leaders on governance issues, leadership skills and management techniques.
  - 5) Promote the use of interns in municipalities as a means to develop future leaders and to improve service to municipalities.
  - 6) Expand and improve training and practical application of good government initiatives. Expand the use of position descriptions and qualifications, training on open communication practices and public engagement, and a process to review problem identification and problem solving in the public sector.
  
- C. Deploy new tools to help cities capitalize on opportunities.
  - 1) Implement a process to identify problems and opportunities for municipalities. (2012-2013)
  - 2) Conduct annual brainstorming sessions of the MTAS Advisory Committee, TML and consultants to identify problems and opportunities. (2012-2013)
  - 3) Develop a catalog of ideas, publications and research.
  - 4) Devise strategies and create work plans based on the results of the deliberative process and ideas, publications and identified research.

### **Dashboard/Performance Metrics**

1. Number of activities, projects and field visits.
2. Number or percentage of cities visited.
3. Number or percentage of solutions implemented within 12 months of project.
4. Level of customer satisfaction in project or service surveys.
5. Number of training courses, course participants, and continuing education units (CEUs) awarded.
6. Percentage of cities using MTAS training services.
7. Value of economic impact.
8. Number of interns placed.

### **Goal 2: SUPPORT AND STRENGTHEN PARTNERSHIPS WITH TML, STATE AND FEDERAL AGENCIES, UNIVERSITY-BASED AGENCIES AND OTHER ENTITIES THAT SUPPORT LOCAL GOVERNMENTS.**

- A. Expand support for and coordination with TML.
  - 1) Expand coordination of programs with TML, The Pool and the Bond Fund.
  - 2) Revisit/reinstate key staff meetings with TML and affiliates. (2012-2013)
  - 3) Continue conference support with training, projects and other activities.
- B. Continue support for national and state professional associations.
  - 1) Develop a policy statement of MTAS services and administrative support that is consistent for each state organization.
  - 2) Continue conference support with training associated with membership meetings. (2012-2013)
  - 3) Continue to emphasize a presence and publications with state and national professional associations.
- C. Support the work of state and federal agencies impacting local governments.
  - 1) Participate in agency task-forces and initiatives.
  - 2) Maintain contacts to track and identify proposed rules and legislation. (2012-2013)
  - 3) Communicate clearly the issues and concerns of local governments to achieve effective outcomes and balance in new regulations.
- D. Partner with other university departments and consulting services to link university expertise with the issues facing municipalities.
  - 1) Identify the availability of partners and resources. (2012-2013)

- 2) Coordinate research and technical needs with these partners and resources.

#### **Dashboard/Performance Metrics**

- 1) Number of training hours offered by MTAS at municipal association meetings.
- 2) Number of organizations supported.
- 3) Number of agency-wide hours committed to this effort.
- 4) Number of collaborative projects with academic departments.
- 5) Number of state and federal projects, including grants and contracts received to provide service.

### **Goal 3: IDENTIFY AND WORK TO MEET THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF TENNESSEE CITIES.**

- A. Analyze the changing needs of cities.
  - 1) Develop a diverse coalition of public and private partners, including university resources, to review the issue and a process to support this effort. (2012-2013)
  - 2) Conduct a regular and on-going needs assessment or service priority survey, and stratify the data by city size and location.
- B. Develop a strategy for services for all cities.
  - 1) Use the data collected to align the services of MTAS with the needs of all cities, in coalition with participants and partners. (2012-2013)
  - 2) Based on the strategy created, develop and revive partnerships with metropolitan-area cities and their surrounding communities.
  - 3) Communicate the benefits of supporting all cities, large and small.
- C. Strengthen the relationship and workings of the Advisory Committee.
  - 1) Diversify representation.
  - 2) Develop meetings that advance the MTAS efforts of consulting, training, and research. (2012-2013)

#### **Dashboard/Performance Metrics**

1. Number of MSA services.
2. Number of mass communications to cities (EMMAs, annual report, etc.)
3. Number of research and innovative projects produced (i.e. new research projects, submittals to Knowledgebase, new training initiatives, etc.).

#### **Goal 4: DEVELOP AN ORGANIZATION CAPABLE OF DELIVERING THE VISION.**

- A. Manage by strategy.
  - 1) Implement the strategic plan, and change initiatives and annual workplan as appropriate. (2012-2013)
  - 2) Develop strategies within each of the program and key areas.
- B. Recruit, develop and retain a workforce capable of delivering the vision.
  - 1) Maintain a commitment to professional development. (2012-2013)
  - 2) Become an Employer of Choice.
    - i. Improve annual performance review process
    - ii. Expand recognition programs
    - iii. Ensure adequate tools/resources to perform job
  - 3) Develop and implement a program to aggressively identify and recruit qualified applicants for MTAS position vacancies, and expand the number of minority and female applicants. (2012-2013)
  - 4) Implement the IPS/MTAS compensation plan, moving pay toward market.
- C. Maintain and expand funding.
  - 1) Work with university leaders, TML, and the MTAS Advisory Committee to assure adequate funding for essential programs. (2012-2013)
  - 2) Identify and pursue opportunities to diversify funding.
  - 3) Increase private fundraising.
- D. Formalize and continue the organizational commitment to continuous improvement.
  - 1) Continue development of the Baldrige application and process. (2012-2013)
    - i. Review recommendations developed from the Baldrige process and where appropriate incorporate these into agency processes, goals and objectives.
  - 2) Strengthen internal business processes.
    - i. Streamline and accelerate the hiring process.
    - ii. Establish a business processes task force. (2012-2013)
    - iii. Resolve calendar inconsistencies and travel reimbursement issues.
  - 3) Align internal operations to support our mission.
    - i. Continue consultants meetings at least twice per year. (2012-2013)
    - ii. Develop and address a priority list of internal operations that require mission alignment.

#### **Dashboard/Performance Metrics**

1. Percent of staff paid at the midpoint of the market rate.
2. Diversity of applicants.
3. Retention rate of staff.
4. Percent improvement in employee satisfaction
5. Hours and dollar value of professional development as a percentage of total budget.
6. Percentage of staff meeting UT professional development standard.
7. Percentage sources and amounts of MTAS funding.
8. Percent increase in private giving.
9. Baldrige achievement level.
10. Percent of filled budgeted FTE positions.