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Series

Why Should Governments Join Up?

Why Now?
What do we gain?

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Governments are "joining up" in a variety of ways and through multiple means. The "new normal" is accepted across the country as the reality of the present and the prophesy for the future. That means less revenue coming into government during a most challenging time in the history of this nation and world. Past models for "going it alone" were the "old normal" approach. Past approaches ensured complete control, independence of thought, independence of operations, and to some extent, predictability. It also avoided the need to evaluate, discuss, collaborate and compromise. Incentives, rewards and recognition only encouraged such approaches. What did that cost taxpayers? A lot! Both in terms of redundant investment and the lack of integration, interoperability and shared information. Enter the new normal. The country can no longer afford the government of the past. There simply aren't enough resources and citizens are demanding interoperability of organization, process and data in their government. Governments have seen some recovery in revenues but they are still lagging fiscal year 2008 by over $20 billion. The pattern of recessionary periods presents shorter time periods between recessions and each recession is more significant than the last. Federal resources for state and local governments are declining. The impact on government is more and deeper budget cuts as presented by the National Association of State Budget Officers. Going forward in time the budget cuts present higher and higher "hills" representing the *number states* that have made budget cuts and the *magnitude* of those cuts.

General Fund Revenue: FY 2007 - FY 2012
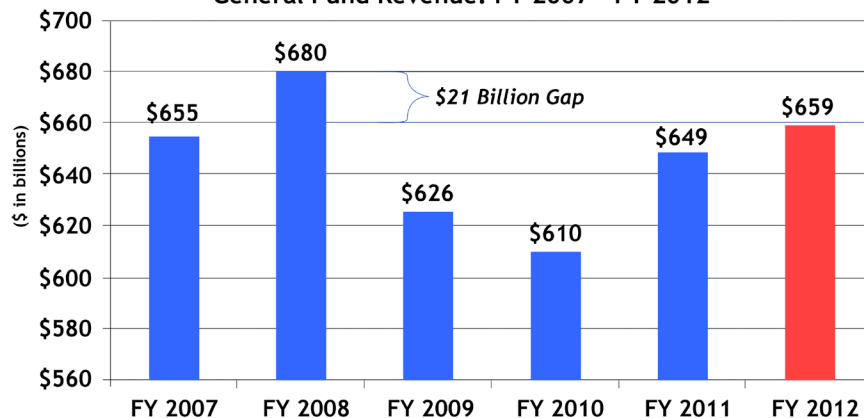
* FY 2007 - - 2012 are actual. FY 2011 is preliminary actiual and FY 2012 is enacted

NASCIO recognizes that governments must come together for mutual benefit and survival! But its not all bad news. There is *opportunity* in these budgetary "hills." Many government leaders, policy makers, city managers, county commissions, CIOs, COOs, are astute in evaluating the current circumstances and developing winning strategies for not only dealing with the current global, national and regional economics, they have recognized that they must collaborate to not only survive but to *thrive*. These leaders are more interested in achieving higher levels of service, economies of scale, and effectiveness not achievable "going it alone."

What exactly are the gains achieved?

Save Money!

First and foremost are the *cost efficiencies* gained. Opportunities for saving money through collaborative purchase agreements to purchase common systems and shared technology have been around for some time. Early adopters in the government and industry alike were employing time-sharing approaches. Local governments in Minnesota were looking for a better way to purchase information technology. Finance directors for seven small cities got together to explore the possibility of automating financial business processes and to do it together. Born out of that first initiative is the Local Government Information Systems (LOGIS) Association. LOGIS is in place today and includes 37 cities, three counties and several local agencies. Members of the association benefit by being part of a larger financial base for negotiating contracts that allow smaller communities to benefit from top tier software they could simply not afford if negotiating on their own.

What are the most important reasons for adopting cross-jurisdiction collaboration ?

- Improving policy development across a jurisdiction = 32%
- Increasing efficiency and/or effectiveness through reducing duplication in programs = 81%
- Increase efficiency and/or effectiveness through sharing in production of services = 86%
- Increase efficiency and/or effectiveness through integrating the provision of services = 72%
- Increase ability to deliver new programs and services = 58%
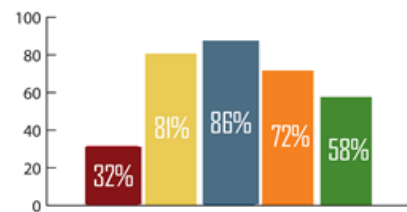
Leadership for a Networked World 2012 Survey

Increased Effectiveness!

When agencies and jurisdictions join up, they can achieve greater levels of effectiveness through comprehensive interoperable and integrated value chains, and shared data. In 2004, the Virginia Corrections Information System (VirginiaCORIS) initiative was framed by the Commonwealth of Virginia Corrections Department recognizing that effective management requires a *full enterprise view* of the functions, processes and data related to offender management. Instead of creating "silos of excellence" with limited scope, a complete view of offender management is pursued that puts special emphasis on how agencies, departments and jurisdictions work together through common data architecture and process integration. That *enterprise view* in-

cludes law enforcement, courts, facilities, probation and parole. VirginiaCO-RIS enables coordination and orchestration across local, state and federal law enforcement. VirginiaCORIS provides the means for multiple agencies within justice to achieve new levels of effectiveness resulting in increased public safety by providing a thorough view of offender histories, current status, risk profile, sentencing and release. VirginiaCORIS provides for information access and sharing 24/7. The ROI over a 20-year span is a positive 13.5%.

More Capabilities and Increased Capacities!

One of the dynamics that appear with collaboratives is an *expanded community of ideas* – group thought – a *wikinomics* approach to looking at problems and evaluating solutions. What can happen is one idea can spawn other ideas from a broad community of contributors. This kind of behavior gets to be a habit – a good habit. The whole community gradually adopts this habit of continually looking for ways to deliver government services better and to contribute to the grander vision of doing so.

This has happened in Michigan where statewide solutions are generated "statewide" – often from counties and cities. Michigan has made it a priority to pull together local jurisdictions into a statewide community that shares ideas and solutions. One example is from Oakland County. The county developed a solution for reaching new levels of efficiency and effectiveness in scheduling, conducting and reporting inspections of restaurants and issuing food service licenses. The E-Health Foods system includes a GIS component for assigning inspectors and presenting travel routes. Historical inspection data is easily accessed using the Inspection Tracker. During an inspection, the user can query the Violation Search interface using a keyword or food code to easily view previous violations and add new violations. Upon completion of an inspection, an inspection report is created, including the e-signature of the certified manager. This report can be printed on-site or emailed to the establishment. Through the Michigan collaborative community, the processes, operations and supporting technology are made available to every other jurisdiction in the state. Ideas such as E-Health Foods will eventually be maintained in a *portfolio of capabilities* that can either be replicated or simply employed through cloud services.

Collaboration by state CIOs ranked in order of mentions by respondents

Collaborate with:	Precent
Other state programs (e.g., health, human service, GIS)	84%
Other state CIOs	82%
Other jurisdictions within the state (countries and cites)	75%
Other state business processes (e.g., procurement, identity management)	59%
NASCIO	33%

NASCIO TechAmerica Grant Thornton 2011 State CIO Survey

Broader, More Responsive Range of Policies, Strategies

In addition to integrating platforms and operational processes, joined-up services also entail aligning policies, strategies, planning and management.

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This not only makes improved efficiencies, effectiveness and savings possible but can also serve to accelerate and expand them. Benefits of aligning cross-boundary strategies include:

- Expanding the provision of citizen-centric, whole-of-government solutions and services
- Innovation across service areas and domains – leading to better, perhaps new services
- A more affordable, sustainable solution and operational base
- Sharing not only solution, initiative or program outputs but also broader goals, leading to statewide outcomes

What is possible in the future is open to anyone's imagination. State and local government must collaborate to survive. However, there is also a great message of enthusiastic hope going forward. As some have said, "don't let the current economic crisis go to waste!" State and local governments are teaming up in new ways that break down barriers to information sharing, remove redundant investment, and save money.

Why Now?

Regardless of political party, size or geography of any one state, a critical mass of states shares common government issues. In addition to immediately having to address budget gaps, many governors are considering permanent changes in the scope and size, the very design of government, how to deliver services, relationships to other governments and the private sector, who pays for them, and which ones take priority. In many states, this redesign of government is supported if not driven by information technology (IT). IT is now seen as integral to solutions in domains such as education, health care, transportation and management systems not only at the state enterprise level but also statewide to include counties and cities.

As Gartner and others have noted, while they are at various stages of maturity, there are powerful solution and business practices that have become available, and management and collaborative lessons to be learned from the transitions from e-government to joined –up, open and smart government. Examples of both established and maturing solutions that support cross-boundary initiatives include the cloud, broadband, infrastructure and application sharing, smart computing and government, and joined sourcing / procurement.

NASCIO's State and Local Collaboration Working Group has been formed to explore this universe of collaboration. On first iteration, this initiative is learning what collaboratives have formed and what makes them work. NASCIO is working with its state and industry members, and other non-profit associations such as the Public Technology Institute (PTI). Together – in collaboration – this working group is uncovering amazing stories of inter-government collaboration.

What is the future? Sounder policies and strategies, better government – better service – better outcomes - a better country. *Stay tuned to more from this NASCIO initiative.*

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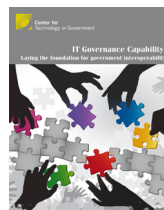
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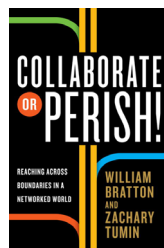
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