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# City-County Collaboration: Helping governments work together

Facing severe budget pressures and a desire to upend the status quo, a new mayor of Chicago and a new Cook County Board president set in motion an extraordinary collaboration to drive efficiency and improve services. Civic Consulting Alliance was there to help turn their vision into **reality**.

## Introduction

Since the 1830's, the City of Chicago and Cook County governments have served overlapping constituents. Yet, their history of collaboration on areas of mutual interest has been sporadic.

In 2011, two newly elected leaders resolved to change the arc of history. Cook County Board President Toni Preckwinkle and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel and were elected into office with mandates to find new ways of doing business. Enormous budget gaps at the City and County provided the rationale for cooperation between the two governments. The two new leaders provided the resolve to make it happen.

To this task, Mayor Emanuel and President Preckwinkle established the Joint Committee for City-County Collaboration (Joint Committee) to uncover areas for cooperation, shared cost savings and service improvements. For more than a year Civic Consulting Alliance and its pro bono partners managed the Joint Committee and its efforts. Through cross-functional project management support and their ability to bring parties together to develop common solutions, Civic Consulting Alliance and its partners made the vision a reality.

## Action

More than 24 teams were established as subsets of the Joint Committee, made up of staff from both the County and City and covering functional areas such as procurement, public safety, workforce development, fleet services, IT support and regulatory functions. The teams were tasked with creating business plans for potential joint projects that could save money, increase revenue, or improve service delivery. With a staff person assigned to each topic, Civic Consulting Alliance kept the teams driving forward on an aggressive project timeline.

Civic Consulting Alliance also recruited and deployed private sector expertise on a pro bono basis. Accenture provided management support, while Allstate, N'Digo and Perkins Coie worked on an anti-violence collaboration. Mayer Brown provided legal support and Schiff Hardin helped with an elections collaboration. Limerick Advisors assisted with workforce development, while IBM lent technology expertise across a number of teams. More than \$460,000 in pro bono services, from some of the most talented companies in the area, were applied to the effort. The committee produced a series of business plans on topics ranging from workforce development to energy efficiency.

## Results

The initiative is now considered a model for inter-governmental partnerships. The Joint Committee delivered more than \$70 million in revenue enhancements and cost reductions in the first two years and has significant future potential. Several important services have been consolidated, made more effective and easier to use for constituents. The procurement process for small businesses has been streamlined. The Minority and Women-owned Business (M/WBE) procedure for certifying has been made reciprocal across the city and county. Public safety has been enhanced through strengthened coordination between the City and County Homeland Security Departments. New revenues have been realized through joint enforcement operations, such as issuing citations for each other's tobacco tax violations.

One of the most visible changes is the creation of the Chicago-Cook Workforce Partnership. Previously, three separate workforce investment boards — Chicago, Northern Cook and Southern Cook — were overseeing federal funds and programs, which led to inconsistency and inefficiency. The single, reorganized organization is more attractive to potential funding sources, which has led to more than \$6 million in additional grant funding, and more than \$2 million in reduced annual administrative costs, not to mention improved outcomes for those looking for employment.

Most importantly, the work of the Joint Committee has helped create a new culture of cooperation within the County and City. Many traditional barriers have been broken down. Today, County and City employees are working together at unprecedented levels to make smarter decisions.

**\$70 million**

in cost-savings to the city and county in the first two years

**\$8 million**

in additional grant funding and reduced administrative costs

**8**

pro bono partners involved

**\$460,000**

in pro bono contributions

## Partners

Accenture

Allstate

IBM

Limerick Advisors

Mayer Brown

N'Digo

Perkins Coie

Schiff Hardin

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