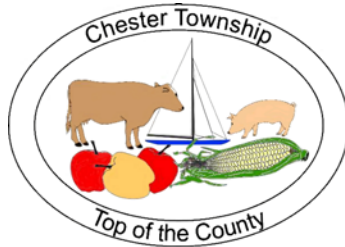


Township of Chester
Ottawa County, Michigan



**EVIP Cooperation, Collaboration and
Consolidation Plan**

INTRODUCTION

As part of new state government requirements to improve intergovernmental cooperation throughout state and local governments, Chester Township has developed this report to our residents. In order to receive statutory revenue sharing payments, the Township is required to present a plan with one or more proposals to increase its existing level of cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation, either within the jurisdiction or with other jurisdictions. The plan must also include a listing of any previous services consolidated with the cost savings realized from each consolidation and an estimate of the potential savings for any new service consolidations being planned.

Chester Township has a long history of collaborating with its neighboring communities and other organizations. Many of the collaborative efforts have become routine business for Chester Township. The benefits are not always simply about saving money, but about improving and enhancing the service to our residents.

The EVIP Revenue Sharing Statute requires this plan list the cost savings for each collaborative venture. The calculation of the cost savings often depends on perspective of the entity making the estimate and the set of assumptions about the level of service to be provided. For this report, the estimate of cost savings will be from the perspective of Chester Township. The level of service is assumed to be the current level of service. The amount of cost savings is exact or estimated from FY 2010-2011 being realized in FY 2011-2012.

This report identifies current collaborative ventures that Chester Township is a member of. Each service description will include an estimate of the cost savings, either in dollars or enhanced level of services for citizens and businesses. Lastly, this report will highlight several collaborative/consolidated concepts that the Township has been working on or is receptive to, which could further enhance collaboration, cooperation and efficiencies with taxpayer dollars.

If you have any questions about the content of this document, please feel free to contact the Clerk's office at 3509 Sehler St., Conklin, by phone at 616-899-5544 or email clerk@chester-twp.org.

Current Collaborations:

1. Zoning Administration

Our zoning administration needs are limited, due to the fact that most of our land is used for agricultural purposes, and there is only a small percentage of residential, commercial or industrial development. We have for many years shared the services of our zoning administrator with other municipalities. Because this is a part time position, it is difficult to find an experienced, qualified zoning administrator willing to work exclusively for Chester Township. By sharing this employee, we are able to meet the needs of our Township without bearing the full burden of their salary.

An additional benefit to this arrangement is the sharing of knowledge and resources between our township and other units of government. Having an employee that is familiar with the operations of other entities provides opportunities for implementation of best practices, collaboration on joint projects and sharing of information.

Estimated Cost Savings: Salary and benefits savings of \$5,000-\$10,000 annually. This includes shared expenses for training/certification costs.

2. Chester Township Fire Department

The Chester Township Fire Department participates in many cooperative efforts with other area departments, such as mutual aid agreements, joint training, collective purchasing, and sharing of equipment.

Estimated Cost Savings: It is difficult to estimate the savings for these programs. As a small, volunteer department these collaborations make it possible for us to have a more efficient, professional and better equipped department than we could otherwise afford.

3. Geographical Information System

Ottawa County GIS is funded by taxpayers within Ottawa County. The GIS Authority provides maps, aerial photographs and other address related information. The GIS Authority also provides a web interface for our residents to easily access the information. The aerial photographs are used by the assessor, zoning administration and building permit departments. Chester Township contributed \$788.10 for the most recent annual fee. By participating, we are able to receive updated aerial photographs and zoning maps at a reduced or no cost. The web interface makes the information available to our residents.

Estimated Cost Savings: Obviously, providing this service at the Township level would be impossible. For the software and technology, it could be tens of thousands of dollars and annual maintenance would likely cost around \$8,000-\$10,000 at a minimum. Thankfully the partnership with Ottawa County has provided our unit and our residents with a service that would otherwise not be available.

4. Building Inspections

Imperial Municipal Services coordinates building inspection services for Chester Township and several other area municipalities. Sharing these services allows for consistent, professional services to be provided for our residents, while reducing our operating costs.

Estimated Cost Savings: If the Township had to hire inspectors, even on an as needed basis, it would require a general fund appropriation, which at this time of declining revenue would be impossible. Under this arrangement, these services are paid for through permit charges. Beyond cost, this affords those who need permits access to professional staff and consistency that would not otherwise exist.

5. Conklin Sewer System

Chester Township operates the sewer lagoons for the Conklin sewer system. Initial funding and set up of the system was done in partnership with Ottawa County. Their assistance allowed for low cost loans, engineering expertise and support throughout the process that saved thousands of dollars for our residents and the Township at large. This cooperative effort continues as the County provides servicing and maintenance of the lagoons.

Estimated Cost Savings: It is difficult to calculate the savings realized during the start up process. The continued support costs are approximately \$15,000-\$20,000 annually. These costs would be significantly higher if Chester Township were to hire personnel with the expertise to perform these services. We are, however, looking into taking on some of the routine tasks, such as mowing or snowplowing, in order to reduce a few of the charges.

6. Worker's Compensation Insurance

Chester Township is a member of the Michigan Municipal League Workers Compensation Fund. In partnership with over 200 cities, villages, townships, counties and special districts we are able to keep premiums low and

receive dividend checks when the fund is healthy and claims are down. The Fund provides assistance in establishing safety guidelines for employees, providing a safer work environment and mitigating potential risks.

Estimated Cost Savings: Premiums through private sector insurance carriers have historically been 25% or more higher than those charged by the Fund. The current year's premium was \$1,319.

7. Emergency Action Guidelines

Chester Township worked together with representatives from Ottawa County and other municipalities to develop an emergency management plan for the County.

Estimated Cost Savings: Ottawa County took the lead in preparing the Plan. Without their lead, each community would have had to devote its resources to write their own plan. We estimate that it would have cost the Township \$3,000-\$5,000 to prepare its own plan.

8. Library Services

Library services for Chester Township residents are provided through the Coopersville Area District Library. A millage generated more than \$45,000 for tax year 2010. By participating as part of this cooperative, Chester Township is able to make available the use of this facility without the expense of operating a township library.

Estimated Cost Savings: If the Township ran its own library, a general fund appropriation would have to be made and the Township would have to build or purchase its own building and operate it. It is difficult to estimate what the cost would be (estimate \$90,000).

9. Police Services

Chester Township does not have a police department, but is served by the Ottawa County Sheriff's Department. In addition to the routine coverage, we contract for a Community Officer. This officer is dedicated to Chester Township approximately 8 hours per week. They conduct home security checks for vacationing residents, assist with zoning enforcement, and are able to spend time doing additional surveillance of problem areas. They are also available to conduct educational sessions for schools and other groups, and informational community meetings.

Estimated Cost Savings: This service currently costs the Township approximately \$14,000 annually. The cost for the Township to hire an officer and provide a vehicle, along with all of the additional expenses for insurance, benefits and maintenance would be at least double that amount.

10. Assessing Services

As with zoning administration, the Township does not need a full time assessor so we share these services with another municipality. Our assessor oversees the department and handles all the work that requires a certified assessor. An assistant takes care of the day-to-day operations, performing the clerical duties at a lower pay scale.

Estimated Cost Savings: Assessor salary is currently \$9,450 annually. This amount would likely be closer to \$20,000 if the assessor worked exclusively for Chester Township and performed all the clerical duties.

11. Elections

Working with Ottawa County Clerk's office, Chester Township is able to purchase supplies for elections at a reduced rate, contract with the County for programming of the election equipment, have access to joint training and collaborate with the County Clerk staff, along with other municipal clerks, to ensure that the election process runs as smoothly as possible.

Estimated Cost Savings: Purchasing equipment and supplies in bulk allows for a 20-25% cost savings. The coordination of other services saves not only in training costs, but provides more accuracy by having an individual who is more experienced perform these duties.

12. Council on Aging

Chester Township, along with Polkton Township, Wright Township and City of Coopersville, formed a cooperative to administer the recreational activities for the senior residents of these municipalities. Funding is provided through a millage paid to the Ottawa County Council on Aging. A portion of the millage money is allocated to our group to provide a variety of services including lunches, field trips, exercise classes and a choir.

Estimated Cost Savings: These activities were set to be eliminated by the Ottawa County Council on Aging due to administrative problems. In order to continue providing these services to our local senior citizens, the committee of neighboring municipalities was formed. There were no cost savings to this effort, but the expenses for the committee are minimal as we are able to keep operating costs low. The true benefit for this cooperative is being able to provide a service that would otherwise have been eliminated.

Future Collaborations/Consolidations

Chester Township is always open to collaborative ventures. It is important to look into possible merits of any partnership and evaluate the pros and cons. The Township has identified several future collaborative/consolidation proposals.

1. As mentioned above, we would like to review the costs of routine maintenance at our sewer lagoons. By contracting with a local service, rather than someone from Grand Haven, there may be some cost savings to be realized.
2. We have met with representatives of neighboring fire departments to discuss potential collaborative efforts. Although no *new* opportunities were identified, a commitment to continuing and expanding the current efforts was made. Whenever possible we will continue to share resources and work together to reduce costs.
3. We are in contact with neighboring communities to review our snowplowing, lawn mowing and other maintenance type services. It is hoped that we can either contract for services with each other, or combine our service requests to obtain better rates with outside contractors.
4. A resolution (copy follows) has been adopted expressing a commitment to the principles of cooperation and collaboration, and authorizing the Board to appoint representatives to participate in discussions that would promote future efforts.

**Township of Chester
Ottawa County
Resolution 2011-12-01**

A resolution to authorize inter-local cooperation, collaboration and consolidation plan agreements

Whereas, The State of Michigan, through Public Act 63 of 2011, introduced the Economic Vitality Incentive Grant Program to provide incentive based grants to cities, villages, townships and counties that elect to combine government operations; and

Whereas, few, if any, individual local governments have all the resources they may need to provide all services or purchase equipment for all its needs; and, the State of Michigan has requested local municipalities to share services and embrace the concept of regionalism; and,

Whereas, it is in the best interest of communities to look beyond their own immediate township, village, city and county boundaries to share resources in order to build stronger relations, merge operations and combine use of resources in order to save costs.

Now, therefore be it resolved by the Township of Chester, Ottawa County in regular session on December 12, 2011 that:

Section 1. The Township Supervisor, or other Township Representative, is hereby authorized to represent the Township in discussions for possible local cooperation, collaboration and consolidation agreements.

Section 2. Pursuant to the agreement, the Township Board shall designate a representative for requesting, or receiving requests and for participation assistance relating to officials of other local governments.

Section 3. Upon adoption, the Township Supervisor, or other Township Representative, shall initially facilitate this resolution through any present or future agreements and report to the Township from time to time, cost savings and other information to implement Economic Vitality Incentive Programs.

Section 4. For the purpose of approving or rejecting the provisions of this resolution, it shall be effective upon being approved by a majority vote of the Chester Township Board by roll call vote at a regularly scheduled meeting.

The foregoing Resolution was offered by Creager and supported by Kelly, the vote being as follows:

YEAS: Berenbrock, Creager, Goodno, Kelly, & Redding

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

ABSTAIN: None

RESOLUTION DECLARED ADOPTED.

Economic Vitality Incentive Program Certification of Consolidation of Services

Issued under authority of Public Act 63 of 2011. Filing is mandatory to qualify for payments.

Each city/village/township applying for Consolidation of Services payments must:

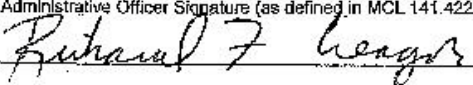
1. **Certify to the Michigan Department of Treasury (Treasury) that the local unit listed below has produced and made readily available to the public, a plan to increase its existing level of cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation of services (either within the jurisdiction or with other jurisdictions). The plan shall include a listing of any previous services consolidated with the cost savings realized from each consolidation and an estimate of potential savings for any new service consolidations being planned.**
2. **Submit to Treasury a copy of the plan to increase cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation of services.**

This certification, along with a cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation plan, **must be received by January 1, 2012** (or the first day of a payment month) in order to qualify for that month's payment. Post mark dates will not be considered. For questions, call (517) 373-2697.

PART 1: LOCAL UNIT INFORMATION

Local Unit Name Chester Township	
Local Unit Code 701030	Local Unit County Ottawa
Contact Name Janice Redding	Contact Telephone Number (616) 899-5544

PART 2: CERTIFICATION

<i>In accordance with Public Act 63 of 2011, the undersigned hereby certifies to Treasury that by January 1, 2012, the above mentioned local unit has produced and made readily available to the public a plan to increase cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation of services. The plan for cooperation, collaboration, and consolidation of services is attached to this signed certification.</i>	
Chief Administrative Officer Signature (as defined in MCL 141.4221) 	
Title Supervisor	Date 12/12/2011

Completed and signed forms (including required attachments) should be e-mailed to: TreasORTA@michigan.gov

If you are unable to submit via e-mail, mail the completed form and required attachments to:

Michigan Department of Treasury
Office of Revenue and Tax Analysis
PO Box 30722
Lansing MI 48909

Treasury Use Only		
EVIP Eligible	Y N	Certification Received Plan Received
Final Certification		
		EVIP Notes