

# 21<sup>st</sup> Century Local Government: Report of the New York State Commission on Local Government Efficiency and Competitiveness **Recommendations in Brief**

## ***Regional Services***

- Centralize certain services at the county level: assessing, tax collection, emergency dispatch, civil service commissions, vital records
- Provide flexibility for counties to share jail facilities and manage jail populations
- Expand local governments' ability to share services
- Encourage justice court consolidation
- Consolidate IDAs at the county or regional level
- Enable multiple counties to share functions like weights & measures and health directors
- Allow renegotiation of collective bargaining agreements when consolidations occur

## ***Modern Municipal Structures***

- Require town-wide approval for new villages and local reconsideration of small villages
- Ease procedures for consolidation, citizen petitions, and coterminous town-villages
- Require local consideration of county-level management for fire protection
- End compensation for special district commissioners, turn over management of sanitation districts to towns, and require local reconsideration of all commissioner-run districts
- Allow local governments to make property tax sharing agreements
- Strengthen home rule by prohibiting the judicial doctrine of "implied preemption"
- Examine reclassifying some cities, towns and villages, and reconsider powers for each class

## ***School District Restructuring***

- Empower the Commissioner of Education to order consolidation
- Set up local schools restructuring committees to examine service sharing and consolidation
- Authorize regional collective bargaining contracts for new hires (phased in at local option)
- Facilitate consolidation of back office services and regional high schools

## ***Informed & Active Voters***

- Hold all local elections on November or May dates
- Reduce number of elective offices by converting certain positions to appointive
- Provide better information for voters
- Improve local financial data for benchmarking

## ***Aid & Incentives***

- Local Government Efficiency Grants and 21st Century Demonstration Projects
- Increase aid for efficient assessing using modern professional standards
- Encourage regional solutions, cooperative services and consolidation

## ***Addressing Cost Drivers***

- Require minimum employee contributions for health insurance
- Ease municipal cooperative health plan rules
- Review public employee pension benefit options (Tier 5)
- Reform Wicks and other procurement rules

## ***Sustaining Local Efficiency***

- Maintain a long-term focus on local efficiency at the state level, using existing state agency resources organized through a Center for Local Government Efficiency that will support local initiatives, promote cost-savings and follow through on Commission recommendations