

How does Somerset County
save taxpayers

TENS of **MILLIONS**
annually
by Sharing Services?



History indicates that the growth of our nation was based on sharing.

“Generosity and sharing are greatly valued. Most Indians freely exchange property and food. The respected person is not one with large savings, but rather one who gives generously.”

Indian Values, Attitudes and Behaviors - Joann Sebastian Morris

Times are now dictating that we must consider returning to the values of the Native Americans who first settled this country and taught our founding fathers. They valued sharing out of necessity. We evolved into a society that cherishes home rule. As our country and our economy has grown, we have to revisit those philosophies. Economic survival will once again require sharing of our resources.

In 1991, Somerset County took the bold step of employing the services of a consultant to survey municipalities and school districts to determine:

What is being shared?

What do communities want to share?

What are the obstacles to sharing?

This proactive stance was taken in anticipation to slow economic growth for the state and the resulting decreases in state aid, increased reliance on local property taxes to fund essential services, and necessary expenses outpacing revenues, particularly in public education. In the nearly two decades since this initiative began, these predictions have become undeniably true.

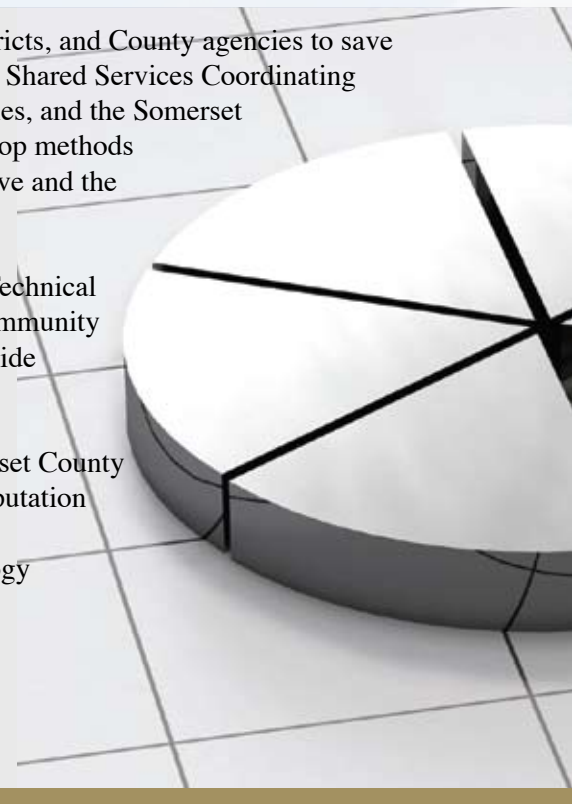
Somerset County’s Shared Service initiative has continued to be driven by the public’s demand for a high level of service and resistance to higher taxes. Because of the foresight and commitment of both political and business sector leadership since 1991, Somerset County has remained ahead of the curve.

The Somerset County Business Partnership has taken the lead in advancing the cause of Shared Services because new development, whether in the corporate, industrial, retail, or residential sector, will increase the demand for municipal services. In order to maintain service levels, costs must be minimized. There will be growth in Somerset County. We are working on all levels to ensure that it is Smart Growth.

The following pages will show the methods utilized by municipalities school districts, and County agencies to save nearly \$20 million annually, savings that directly benefit taxpayers. The Somerset Shared Services Coordinating Council, a board consisting of representatives from each of the participating entities, and the Somerset County Municipal Managers Association meet regularly to detail needs and develop methods of sharing. It is to their credit and because of their creativity, that the taxpayers save and the governments maintain service delivery.

In 2007, 21 municipalities, 17 school districts, Somerset County Vocational and Technical Schools, Somerset County Educational Services Commission, Raritan Valley Community College, and 7 departments of Somerset County government with leadership provide by the Board of Chosen Freeholders participated in these initiatives.

The success of recent years has served to further enhance the reputation of Somerset County as the flagship for shared service initiatives in New Jersey and beyond. As this reputation has spread across the state, other governmental agencies have reached out to the Somerset County Business Partnership to share expertise and learn the methodology that has led to success.



PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

MUNICIPALITIES

Bedminster Township
Bridgewater Township
Green Brook Township
Montgomery Township
Raritan Borough
South Bound Brook Borough

Bernards Township
Branchburg Township
Hillsborough Township
North Plainfield Borough
Rocky Hill Borough
Warren Township

Bound Brook Borough
Franklin Township
Manville Borough
Peapack-Gladstone Borough
Somerville Borough
Watchung Borough

***Somerville Shares Skate Park with
Bridgewater & Raritan Residents***

SCHOOL DISTRICTS

Bedminster Board of Education
Bound Brook Board of Education
Branchburg Board of Education
Green Brook Board of Education
Manville Board of Education
North Plainfield Board of Education
Somerville Board of Education
Warren Board of Education
Watchung Hills Regional Board of Education

Bernards Township Board of Education
Bridgewater-Raritan Board of Education
Franklin Board of Education
Hillsborough Board of Education
Montgomery Board of Education
Somerset Hills Board of Education
South Bound Brook Board of Education
Watchung Board of Education

***Purchasing Resource Guide Available to
School Business Administrators***

***Salary Survey of Municipalities & Labor Contract
Reference Materials Aid in Negotiations***

OTHERS

Raritan Valley Community College
Somerset County Educational Services Commission

Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders
Somerset County Vocational Technical School

SHARED SERVICES

(Number indicates how many entities are participating in each initiative)

Administration - 4	Assessor - 4
Child Study Team - 1	Code Enforcement - 8
College AP - RVCC - 1	Community Services - 4
Counselling Services - 3	Court - 5
Custodial Services - 5	Engineering Services - 8
Facility Use by Recreation- 18	Finance - 2
Food Service - 2	Fuel Cooperative Purchasing - 14
Health Services - 18	Information Technology - 7
Insurance - 17	Library - 17
Police Service - 17	Professional Development - 3
PublicWorks - 17	Purchasing/Educational - 15
Purchasing/Municipal - 16	Records Management - 6
Recreation Services - 15	Sanitary Sewer Services - 9
School Psychologist - 4	Snow Removal - 14
Special Education - 7	Staff Training - 2
Student Transportation - 13	Tax Collector - 3
Utility Cooperative Purchasing - 17	Vehicle Maintenance - 11

ONGOING SHARED SERVICES INITIATIVES

BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP & OSHA SIGN ALLIANCE AGREEMENT

The Somerset County Business Partnership, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), and New Jersey Public Employees Occupational Safety & Health (PEOSH) have entered into an alliance to foster safer and more healthful workplaces.

The resources of the three organizations will be combined to provide leadership, guidance, and a positive example to employers and employees in both the private and public sectors. The Alliance will help foster a culture of worker health and safety and accident prevention through sharing of technical knowledge and best practices.

The goals of the Alliance include development of training and educational programs designed to promote and improve worker safety and health in Somerset County; share expertise in developing and communicating information and outreach materials designed to enhance employer and employee recognition and prevention of workplace hazards; work with Somerset County Business Partnership membership organizations to build a safety and health awareness culture within the Somerset County community.

RARITAN/SOMERVILLE JOINT PUBLIC WORKS FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Boroughs of Raritan and Somerville are pursuing the commission of a feasibility study to explore the potential for establishing a regional public works department and facility that will serve both communities.

With the support of the Business Partnership and the Regional Center Partnership, the governments of Raritan and Somerville have applied to New Jersey Department of Community Affairs for a Shared Services Grant (SHARE) to fund the study. The existing PublicWorks facility in Raritan is both inadequate and located in an area prone to flooding. Somerville also has an expressed need for upgrades to its public works garage. Bound Brook and Bridgewater have already established a regional facility serving the needs of both communities.

The Business Partnership is providing technical assistance to the effort and will assist in offsetting a portion of the costs associated with grant application.

The combined facility is expected to provide a greater level of service to both communities while realizing both short and long-term cost savings to taxpayers.

COURT & ASSESSOR CONSOLIDATION INITIATIVE

A Mayor's Roundtable hosted by Freeholder Pat Walsh brought to the table an interest in studying consolidation of the municipal courts and municipal tax assessor services. Outreach to the County Assignment Judge showed additional interest in sharing to increased court efficiency and the impact of court administration on the municipalities.

Specific criteria for the studies of the tax assessor service and the courts are in development.



360 Grove Street • Bridgewater, New Jersey
Post Office Box 833, Somerville, NJ 08876
908-218-4300 • www.scbp.org

