

Evanston, Illinois
Evanston Township Efficiency
Assessment

April 2013



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Introduction

In 2012 Evanston voters expressed their desire that the City of Evanston and the Town of Evanston (Evanston Township) proactively work to coordinate services, achieve efficiencies where possible, and compound the positive impact of both City and Township services. The City and the Township have begun implementing a number of initiatives to meet this charge.

For example, in September of 2013, Township staff will be relocating to the Evanston Civic Center and will be collocated with many of the City of Evanston's departments and elected officials. This initiative will result in rent and utility savings, facilitate better coordination between City and Township staff, and collocate Township staff with the City of Evanston City Council, which also serves as the Township Board of Trustees.

To further pursue this initiative, the City of Evanston engaged The Novak Consulting Group to conduct an organizational review of Evanston Township's operations. The purpose of this review was to identify opportunities to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of Township service delivery and to determine the appropriate staffing levels and reporting structure for Evanston Township.

In order to complete the objectives of this engagement, The Novak Consulting Group met with the City Manager in January 2013 to begin work and collect initial information. Subsequently, the consulting team conducted interviews with Township and City staff to develop a detailed understanding of Township operations and the areas where they interface with City of Evanston operations.

In addition to interviewing key staff and elected officials, The Novak Consulting Group conducted a review of background documents including, but not limited to, City and Township budget documents, state statutes, performance measurement data, and internal City analysis completed in support of this project.

Lastly, The Novak Consulting Group conducted peer benchmarking and best practice research to inform the analytical process and identify alternative service models that have been leveraged in comparable communities.

This process allowed The Novak Consulting Group the opportunity to understand what seems to work well in the Township, to identify opportunities for improvement, to clarify and document Township processes, requirements and procedures, and to identify several recommendations offering an opportunity to achieve efficiencies and better coordinate City and Township operations. Those recommendations, which are summarized in the following section, offer a path toward improvement in five key areas, including Governance, Public Awareness, General Assistance and Workforce Training, Emergency Assistance, Service Integration, and Township Organization Structure.

Summary of Recommendations

The analysis and recommendations offered in this report cover six key theme areas, including: 1) General Assistance and Workforce Training; 2) Emergency Assistance; 3) Service Integration; 4) Township Organization Structure; 5) Public Awareness, and; 6) Governance. In total, eight recommendations are offered which are projected to generate savings of approximately \$89,000 per year. This savings is in addition to the \$72,000 per year annual savings associated with relocating Township Offices to the Evanston Civic center. The recommendations by theme area are summarized below.

General Assistance and Workforce Training

Recommendation 1: Contract for the delivery of workforce training and Job Club to GA clients.

Emergency Assistance

Recommendation 2: Initiate discussions with Connections for the Homeless and Metropolitan Family services to assess the interest and capacity to contract for Emergency Assistance process management.

Service Integration

Recommendation 3: Utilize City of Evanston internal support services for the Township's finance and information technology needs.

Township Organization Structure

Recommendation 4: Fill the Vacant Case Coordinator position.

Recommendation 5: Eliminate the Confidential Accounts/Personnel Manager position.

Public Awareness

Recommendation 6: Establish an updated and user-friendly Evanston Township website.

Recommendation 7: Establish a targeted marketing effort to educate Evanston property owners about the Township's taxpayer advocacy services.

Governance

Recommendation 8: Enhance the coordination of governance strategies and service delivery between Evanston Township and The City of Evanston

Summary of Evanston Township Operations

The City of Evanston is a Home Rule City government and operates under the council-manager form of government, where a nine member Board of Aldermen provides legislative approval and policy direction for the City. Day-to-day administration of the organization is handled by an appointed professional manager, the City Manager. The City is governed by a Board of Aldermen, each of which represent a specific ward of the City. Evanston also has a directly elected Mayor.

Together, the Mayor and Aldermen function as both the Evanston City Council and as the Board of Trustees of for Evanston Township. The relationship of the Board of Trustees to the Township is not exactly the same as the relationship of the City Council to the City. The Township also has two directly-elected officials, the Supervisor and the Assessor, who direct policy within the offices under their purview. The City Clerk of the City of Evanston also serves as the Clerk to the Township, which in many other townships in the state is another elected position.

The Evanston Township is fairly unique among townships in the State of Illinois. It is one of 20 “coterminous” townships, meaning that it shares its borders with the City of Evanston. The Evanston Township is rare even among coterminous Illinois townships in that it does not have its own independent Board of Trustees. The Evanston Township’s Board of Trustees are the same individuals who serve as the City of Evanston Board of Aldermen—when someone is elected to the City Council they are also automatically elected to the Township’s Board of Trustees. In addition, Evanston Township and the rest of the townships within Cook County are unique within the State because they do not possess the power to assess property values within their borders, as this function is administered by the Cook County Assessor’s Office for all parcels within Cook County. Thus, the Township Assessor’s Office within Cook County primarily provides taxpayer advocacy and outreach. As a result, the staffing profile for the Township Assessor’s Office varies significantly from townships outside of Cook County that are responsible for conducting property valuations.

In the State of Illinois, townships’ primary functions are to provide direct services to unincorporated areas. However, many townships are like Evanston Township in that they are located in urban areas that are also served by other full-service local governments. As a result, urban townships maintain a different book of responsibility than their rural peers. However, regardless of the profile of the Township, the State of Illinois mandates that townships perform three primary responsibilities:

1. The provision of General Assistance (GA) programs
2. The maintenance and construction of roads and bridges in unincorporated areas
3. Property assessment and valuation for the purposes of taxation (except in Cook County)

While these responsibilities fall on all townships, Evanston Township’s uniqueness makes it a special case. By virtue of being located within Cook County, the Evanston Township does not bear responsibility for conducting property assessment and valuation services. All property assessment and valuation in Evanston is performed by the Cook County Assessor’s Office. By virtue of being coterminous with the City of Evanston, the Evanston Township does not bear responsibility for maintaining transportation infrastructure in unincorporated areas, as all road and bridge construction and maintenance is performed by the City of Evanston. Thus, from a statutory perspective, the Evanston Township is left solely with State-mandated responsibility to provide General Assistance to low income residents in Evanston Township.

The Evanston Township provides additional, non-municipal services beyond its State-mandated responsibilities, including the administration of Emergency Assistance (EA) grants to Evanston residents. In addition, the Township Assessor’s Office provides additional support to property tax payers by providing taxpayer advocacy services for Evanston residents.

Evanston Township is organized into two work units: 1) The Township Supervisor’s Office and 2) the Township Assessor’s Office. The work of the two offices is fundamentally unrelated and, as a result, there is little service coordination, though some sharing of support services such as Information Technology (IT) and financial management does exist. The following figure summarizes the Evanston Township’s current organizational structure.

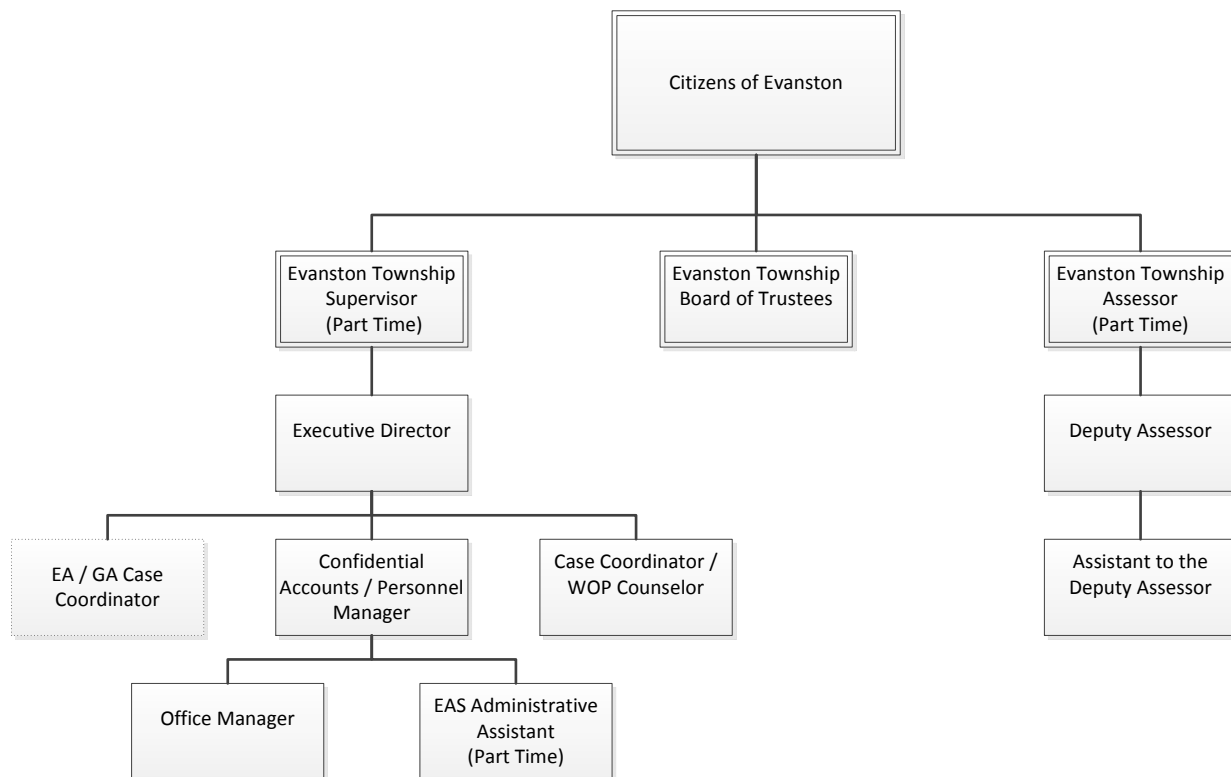


Figure 1: Evanston Township Organization Structure

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The Evanston Township Fiscal Year (FY) 2012/2013 Budget totals approximately \$1.64 million. Approximately \$1.28 million, or 78% of the total budget, is dedicated to the Township's General Assistance program. The Township is primarily funded through property tax revenue and in FY 2012/2013, the Township has projected property tax revenue totaling approximately \$1.12 million.

The Evanston Township Budget is divided into two governmental funds: 1) the General Assistance Fund, and 2) the Town Fund. The General Assistance Fund is dedicated to the operations of the Township Supervisor's Office while the Town Fund is dedicated to the Township Assessor's Office. The following table summarizes the FY 2012/2013 Budget for the Evanston Township.

Table 1: Evanston Township Budget

TOWNSHIP SUPERVISOR'S OFFICE	FY2010/2011 Actual	FY2011/2012 Budget	FY2012/2013 Budget	Percent Change 2010 to 2013
GA Fund Revenue	1,079,616	1,195,158	1,279,353	18.5%
Client Expenditures	430,327	546,041	584,525	35.8%
Supervisor's Office Payroll	270,986	270,657	271,064	0.0%
Fund Administrative Expenses	269,796	276,210	282,565	4.7%
Work Opportunity Program	7,887	9,000	8,500	7.8%
Medical Program	65,416	54,750	76,600	17.1%
Emergency Assistance	35,204	38,500	54,500	54.8%
TOTAL GENERAL ASSISTANCE FUND EXPENDITURES	1,079,616	1,195,158	1,277,754	18.4%
TOWNSHIP ASSESSOR'S OFFICE	FY2010/2011 Actual	FY2011/2012 Budget	FY2012/2013 Budget	Percent Change
Town Fund Revenue	354,306	345,753	366,053	3.3%
Assessor's Office	153,296	152,539	166,953	8.9%
Legal Fees	2,075	5,000	5,000	141.0%
Supervisor's Office	73,153	85,519	61,734	-15.6%
Community Purchased Services	60,000	60,000	86,600	44.3%
Community Action Programs	41,653	42,650	45,650	9.6%
TOTAL TOWN FUND EXPENDITURES	330,177	345,708	365,937	10.8%
TOTAL TOWNSHIP REVENUE	1,409,793	1,540,866	1,645,290	16.7%
TOTAL TOWNSHIP EXPENDITURES	1,409,793	1,540,866	1,643,691	16.6%

Township Supervisor's Office Operations

The Supervisor's Office is the main administrative office of the Township. It is also the office through which the Township manages its GA and EA programs. General Assistance and Emergency Assistance are public grant programs designed to provide financial assistance to Evanston residents who do not qualify for any other type of government assistance, such as Social Security. The Supervisor's Office is overseen by the Evanston Township Supervisor, a directly elected position that serves on a part time basis. The Supervisor provides policy direction for the Township regarding the GA and EA programs, in addition to determining Township-wide policies relating to internal services. Day-to-day operations of the Supervisor's Office are handled by the Executive Director. This position supervises all Supervisor's Office staff, directly interfaces with Assessor's Office staff on daily issues concerning the whole Township, and provides case management and workflow routing for GA cases. Currently, the Executive Director is also performing this case management function for GA and EA cases due to the vacancy in the EA Case Coordinator position.

The Executive Director is supported by 2.5 full-time equivalent (FTE) employee positions, the Confidential Accounts/Personnel Manager, Office Manager and the Emergency Assistance Services (EAS) Administrative Assistant (a part time position). These Office Manager and the Administrative Assistant positions are the primary point of contact for applicants and clients, both in person and over the phone. The EAS Administrative Assistant administers the direct issuance of grants to clients and assists applicants with gathering the information and documentation necessary to complete their applications. The Office Manager administers the Supervisor's Office's internal case tracking software, VisualGA, providing additional technological expertise and capacity for report development. Additionally, the Office Manager plays a "jack of all trades" office management role, specifically related to server management and other related computer issues, providing technical support for small-to-moderate IT issues. Complex IT issues are outsourced to the Township's contract IT provider. The Office Manager and Administrative Assistant are directly supervised by the Confidential Accounts/Personnel Manager. Internal services for the entire Township, such as human resources, payroll, and accounting, are administered by collaboration between the Executive Director, Confidential Accounts/Personnel Manager and contracted service providers.

Ongoing case management for the GA program is provided by the Case Coordinator/Work Opportunity Program (WOP) Counselor and the Executive Director (due to the vacancy in the EA Case Coordinator position). The following figure summarizes the staffing level and reporting structure for the Supervisor's Office.

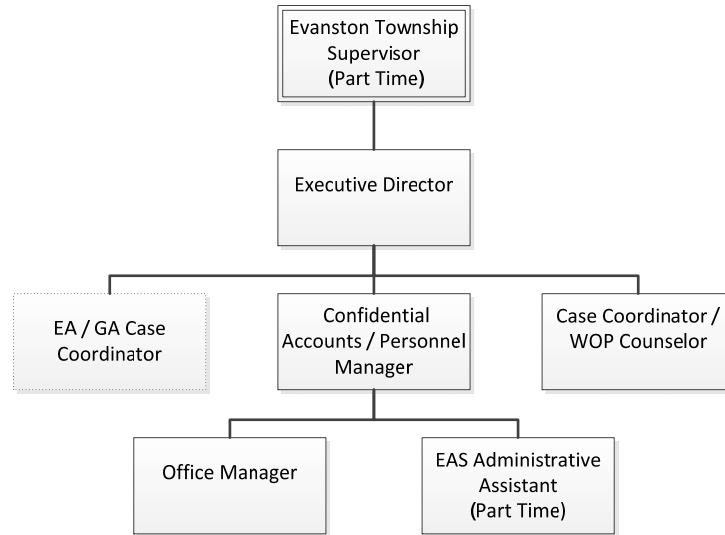


Figure 2: Evanston Township Supervisor’s Office Organizational Structure

The Supervisor’s Office administers a number of additional sub-programs that support the GA program and broader mission of the Office. Those programs are summarized in the table below.

Table 2: Summary of Township Supervisor’s Office Programs

Program	Program Description
General Assistance/ Emergency Assistance	The Township General Assistance Program is a financial aid program designed to meet basic maintenance requirements for a livelihood compatible with health and well-being, plus any necessary medical treatment, care and supplies required because of illness or disability for which there is no other source to receive. The assistance is provided on a monthly payment basis to, or on behalf of, eligible assistance units by the General Assistance Office.
Work Opportunity	As part of General Assistance, townships are required to establish a community work program. There are two options to the program: job training and workforce. Clients who are not on GA because of medical inability to work must participate in either a direct worksite placement or be involved in a "Job Club." The clients in the Job Club are required to attend a two-hour session on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Those in the Job Club are viewed as more "job ready." Some clients who have minimum skills and are in need of "on-the job training" are placed on worksites to enhance their work skills. There are others who cannot reasonably be expected to obtain a job. In the workforce program, they participate in tasks that are designed to benefit the community.

Program	Program Description
	The 50/50 matching program is also offered as an element of the General Assistance program which provides 50% of the starting wage up to a maximum of \$1500 for clients that are hired by an employer. This employment subsidy may be used for trial employment.
Emergency Assistance	Emergency Assistance Services are provided to non-eligible General Assistance clients who meet the established criteria for the services. The services include payment of delinquent rent, mortgages and assessments, utility payments, and emergency food vouchers.
Partnership and Contractual Services	The General Assistance Office establishes working arrangements with the Evanston One Stop and other not-for-profit organizations to better assist clients with counseling, employment, and training opportunities.
Medical Payment System	The General Assistance guidelines require the provision of "necessary" medical services as defined by the Illinois Department of Public Aid. If there are no other sources to provide the necessary services then the Township is responsible for making payment. The Township reimburses the provider at the Public Aid rate.

Source: FY 2012/2013 Evanston Township Budget

At the time of this review, the Supervisor’s Office was managing a caseload of 136 GA clients, under the “needs allowance” grant system. This system—as opposed to the one-size-fits-all “flat grant” system—requires a higher level of interaction between Case Coordinators and clients. The Evanston Township provides GA grants to meet two specific client needs: shelter and personal needs. Shelter grants are issued once a month up to a maximum amount of \$200. Personal needs grants are issued twice a month up to a maximum single payment of \$150 (up to \$300 a month). Thus, the maximum monthly benefit an Evanston Township GA client may receive is \$500.

The level of these needs is determined by the client’s Case Coordinator, which may be either the Case Coordinator/WOP Counselor or the Executive Director. The majority of cases (approximately 82 clients) are managed by the Case Coordinator/WOP Counselor, with the remainder managed by the Executive Director. Clients receiving GA grants are required to either participate in the Township’s work opportunity program (“Job Club”) or in behavioral counseling, based on their Case Coordinator’s assessment of their “employability.” This program is a requirement under Illinois statute.

Behavioral counseling is typically performed by outside agencies, to which a client will be referred by their Case Coordinator. Case Coordinators monitor client’s participation in these programs, a criterion used to determine the client’s ongoing eligibility for GA grants. Case management for the EA program is currently administered by the Executive Director. Attachment A details the case management process for the General Assistance and Emergency Assistance programs.

Township Assessor's Office

The Assessor's Office provides taxpayer advocacy services to the residents of Evanston. These include assistance with appealing the results of the tri-annual Cook County assessment (currently underway in 2013), and assistance with applying for various homeowner or senior property tax exemptions.

The Evanston Township Assessor's office works as an adjunct to the Cook County Assessor, whose stated mission is "to serve the public professionally and responsibly by establishing fair and accurate assessments, seeking equitable tax policies and communicating this information simply and understandably."

Specifically, the mission is to serve Evanston Township taxpayers by assisting them in securing exemptions, preparing and filing assessment appeals, correcting property description errors, and researching all available information pertinent to their properties.

In addition, the Assessor's Office coordinates with the City of Evanston Planning Department to record the specifics of building permits and forward them to the Cook County Assessor and coordinates the registration of Sales Transfer Declarations with the Cook County Recorder of Deeds.

The Assessor's Office is overseen by the Evanston Township Assessor, a directly elected position that serves part time. In Illinois townships outside of Cook County, the Assessor position is responsible for assessing the property values for parcels within the township's borders. In Cook County, that task is administered by the Cook County Assessor's Office. Thus, the main responsibility of the Evanston Township Assessor is to administer a program of tax payer advocacy that attempts to ensure Evanston residents pay the lowest amount they legally owe on their property tax bill.

Day-to-day operations of the Assessor's Office are handled by the Deputy Assessor. This position supervises the other staff position in the Assessor's Office, the Assistant to the Deputy Assessor. These two positions field phone calls and meet with Evanston residents seeking information or help to address issues related to their property tax bill, a large portion of which are senior citizens.

Annually, the Assessor's Office undertakes a senior exemption mailing campaign, aimed at alerting seniors in Evanston about ways in which they can save money on their property tax bill. Approximately 700 seniors are contacted through this program. Contacted seniors will make appointments with Assessor's Office staff who will work with them and the Cook County Assessor's Office to ensure their property tax bill is accurate. In addition to making appointments, the Assessor's Office keeps regular business hours, Monday through Friday, to act as a satellite office of the Cook County Assessor's Office; this provides Evanston residents with a local office to visit regarding property tax questions, rather than forcing them to travel to Chicago. The Assessor's Office helps property owners successfully navigate property tax exemption application processes and serves as a resource to those residents wishing to appeal their property tax assessment.

The following figure shows the Assessor's Office's current organizational structure.

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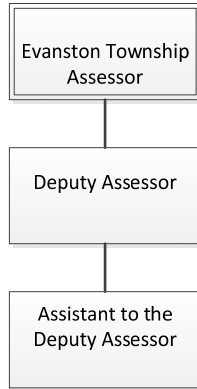


Figure 3: Evanston Township Assessor's Office Organization Structure

Peer Benchmarking

Benchmarking research allows for comparisons that shed light on the similarities and differences in the level and type of services provided by other jurisdictions. While it is impossible to infer absolute measures of efficiency or productivity solely on the basis of benchmarking data, it is possible to identify areas for further research and analysis which can lead to the application of best practices that can be reproduced in different contexts.

The City of Evanston identified four local townships to serve as Evanston Township's peer comparables, including Maine New Trier, Niles, and Oak Park Townships, described below.

- **Maine Township** - Maine Township is located due west of Evanston, just across the I-94 freeway. It includes the populations of a number of municipalities, including most of Park Ridge and Des Plaines, and parts of Niles, Martin Grove and Glenview. The total population living within Maine Township is more than 135,000 people, making it one of the most populous townships in the state. The Township is governed by the Board of Trustees and the following elected officials: Supervisor, Clerk, Assessor, Collector, and Highway Commissioner.
- **New Trier Township** - New Trier Township is the next township north of Evanston, up the shore of Lake Michigan. It serves a population of 56,000 residents of the villages of Wilmette, Kenilworth, Winnetka, and Glencoe, as well as portions of Glenview and Northfield. The Township is governed by the Board of Trustees and the following elected officials: Supervisor, Clerk, Assessor, and Collector.
- **Niles Township** - Niles Township is located directly west of Evanston, bordering the Township across the North Shore Channel. It includes a population of more than 102,000 residents of several municipalities, including Skokie, Lincolnwood and Golf, and parts of Morton Grove, Niles and Glenview. The Niles Township is governed by the Board of Trustees and the following elected officials: Supervisor, Clerk, Assessor, and Collector.
- **Oak Park Township** - Oak Park Township is located approximately 15 miles southwest of Evanston, on the southern side of the I-90 freeway. It had a population just over 52,000 residents in the 2010 Census. The Township is coterminous with the Village of Oak Park, although unlike Evanston, the Township has its own Board of Trustees, separate from the Village. The township is governed by the following elected officials, in addition to the Board of Trustees: Supervisor, Clerk, Assessor, and Collector.

Publicly available data regarding peer township operations is limited. As a result, The Novak Consulting Group sought to contact peer township staff directly to gather information relevant to Evanston Township. This effort produced mixed results, as some peer townships were eager to share information and others were reluctant or non-responsive. In fact, during the benchmarking process it became clear that many peer Townships were reluctant to provide data or information that they viewed as supporting an effort to eliminate the Township form of government. Though it is clear that the analysis and recommendations offered in this report do not suggest the dissolution of the Evanston Township, this perception among some peer jurisdictions significantly limited access to peer benchmarking

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information. However, The Novak Consulting Group was able to gather the limited data that was available and apply it to inform the analysis and recommendations contained in this report.

Evanston Township is staffed with a total of 7.5 FTE. New Trier Township is staffed with eight FTE and total staffing levels for Niles Township are not available in public sources. In comparison, the Evanston Township operation is smaller than Maine and Oak Park Townships, which are staffed with a total of 42 and 43 FTE, respectively. However, in terms of programmatic responsibilities, in this case GA administration and the Taxpayer Advocacy, Evanston is comparable to the other townships.

Currently, two personnel in Evanston Township are dedicated to managing General Assistance and Emergency Assistance caseload. At the time of this review, GA caseload stood at 136 cases; however, according the Township staff, the average monthly caseload is approximately 100 GA cases. The following table summarizes the average GA caseload per Case Coordinator in those townships where applicable data was available.

Table 3: General Assistance Caseload per Case Coordinator

Township	Number of CA Case Manager FTE ¹	Average Monthly GA Caseload	Average Number of GA Cases Managed per Case Manager FTE
Evanston Township	2.0	100	50
Maine Township	2.0	60	30
Niles Township	2.0	62	31
New Trier Township	2.0	N/A	N/A
Oak Park Township	1.5	100	66

The number of GA cases managed per Case Coordinator varied by peer township and ranged between 30 and 66 cases per Case Coordinator, with Evanston Township averaging approximately 50 cases per Case Coordinator. The range likely reflects variations on the Township’s approach to work. For example, case management personnel in Evanston Township are primarily responsible for General Assistance, Emergency Assistance, and workforce training/job club related activities. In this role, they facilitate Township assistance processes but also act as a referral resource, connecting clients with non-profits and other community services. By comparison, Oak Pak Township maintains a higher caseload per case coordinator than Evanston Township, but the amount of work required per client is less than in Oak Park because Oak Park utilizes local non-profit providers for both Emergency Assistance and job club/workforce training. Similarly, Maine Township case workers manage fewer cases per case worker but they also do not directly provide Emergency Assistance programming. In Niles Township, two caseworkers manage an average GA caseload of 31 cases per month, while also managing the Township’s Emergency Assistance process in house. Evanston Township case coordinators maintain a

¹ Excludes part-time elected officials

similar book of work, but manage a larger number of GA cases per case coordinator than Niles Township.

In summary, Evanston Township Case Coordinators provide more in house GA related services house than Oak Park and Maine Township, but do so with similar case worker staffing levels. Similarly Evanston and Niles Township offer similar in-house programming (GA and EA) but Evanston Township personnel manage, on average, 61% more GA cases per case coordinator than Niles Township case management personnel. This data suggests that Evanston Township maintains relatively efficient case management staffing levels, when compared to peer townships.

The staffing levels in the Assessor's Office are also comparable to those of its peer jurisdictions. The Evanston Township Assessor's Office maintains a staff of two FTEs, in addition to the elected Assessor who serves part-time. Oak Park maintains a staffing level of 1 FTE and Maine Township maintains Assessor's Office staff of 2 FTEs. Similar to Evanston Township, Maine and Oak Park Townships provide taxpayer advocacy services, relying on Cook County to conduct property assessments. The following table summarizes Township Assessor's Office staffing per 1,000 population in those townships where applicable data was available.

Table 4: Township Assessor's Office Staff per 1,000 Population and per 1,000 Housing Units

Township	Township Assessor's Office FTE ²	Township Assessor's Office Staff per 1,000 Population	Township Assessor's Office Staff per 1,000 Owner Occupied Housing Units ³
Evanston Township	2	0.03	0.12
Maine Township	4	0.14	N/A
New Trier Township	1	0.02	0.11
Niles Township	N/A	N/A	N/A
Oak Park Township	1	0.02	0.07

A review of available benchmarking data indicates that staffing levels for both GA case management and taxpayer advocacy are comparatively similar across peer townships. However, the Evanston Township stands apart as maintaining a higher average number of GA cases than most of its peers, excluding Oak Park Township, which also manages an average monthly caseload of approximately 100 GA cases.

In addition to programmatic benchmarking research, The Novak Consulting Group conducted research to identify the varying governance models utilized in other Illinois Townships with coterminous borders and a joint Municipal Council/Boards of Trustees. Of the 20 coterminous Townships in Illinois, seven operate under a joint Municipal Council/Board of Trustees. These include: 1) Bloomington Township; 2)

² Excludes part-time elected Township Assessors

³ 2010 U.S. Census

Champagne Township; 3) Cunningham Township; 4) Galesburg Township; 5) Godfrey Township; 6) Macomb City Township, and; 7) Zion Township.

The Novak Consulting Group conducted interviews with five of the seven townships (Champagne and Cunningham Township were not available for interviews) to identify the various approaches utilized to integrate municipal and township operations and governance. That research indicated that there appears to be little direct municipal/township service overlap in these jurisdictions; however, each township did utilize varying approaches to integrate township and municipal governance. For example, in Godfrey and Zion Townships, during one of the municipal council's two meetings per month, the council adjourns and reconvenes as the Board of Trustees and addresses Township business; in Zion Township, the Township Supervisor, as opposed to the Mayor, chairs the trustees meeting. In Macomb City Township, the Board of Trustees meets quarterly. The information gathered through the peer benchmarking process was applied to inform the analysis and recommendations relating to the Township governance process.

In addition, there are a number of other benchmarking distinctions relating to staffing and operations that are highlighted throughout the "Analysis and Recommendations" section of this report.

Analysis and Recommendations

In an effort to identify opportunities for greater cooperation and coordination between the Township and the City of Evanston, The Novak Consulting Group interviewed both City staff and Township staff to determine if there are areas of service overlap or opportunities where services could be better coordinated.

While the City of Evanston and its Township share coterminous borders and a common board by two different names, both governments perform distinct and non-overlapping public functions. It is true that other townships in the State of Illinois perform traditional, “municipal” services, such as the provision of public safety and the building of roads. Were the Evanston Township to be engaged in the delivery of these services, then there would be a clear duplication of effort between the Township and the City. However, the City provides all of the “municipal” functions and service provision taking place within Evanston’s city limits.

The Township currently administers two primary programs, with related sub-activities: 1) the administration of General Assistance grants, a State requirement, and; 2) property tax taxpayer advocacy and support. These specific services do not easily align with traditional city services and as such, there is not an immediate opportunity within the City government where they could be effectively absorbed.

The General Assistance process that the Township follows is largely defined by the State of Illinois. The Novak Consulting Group developed detailed process maps, included as Attachment A, for the GA and EA processes, and compared the Township’s processes to the procedural guidelines established in Illinois statute and outlined in the 2011 Township Officials of Illinois Laws and Duties Handbook.

That review indicates that the Township is attuned to the procedural requirements of the GA and EA processes and has developed an internal process that meets those requirements; Moreover, Case Coordinators, under the oversight of the Executive Director, diligently monitor process timeliness and milestones and ensure that procedural requirements are met.

This effort is supported through the Township’s case management system, VisualGA, which is a functional and well-utilized system used by many Township’s in the State of Illinois. Case approval, routing, and note-taking processes are all managed through Visual GA, providing robust tracking capabilities. The Supervisor’s Office still maintains paper copies of many records and documents but these are only for safe keeping.

As summarized in the “Peer Benchmarking” section of this report, the Supervisor’s Office handles a comparatively high caseload of GA and EA clients, when compared to available peer workload data, providing services that include case management, health and well-being referrals, and work opportunity programming. In addition, the Supervisor’s Office provides in house programs, such as workforce training/job club that many of its peer townships in Cook County contract with local non-profits to

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provide. This practice effectively increases the workload managed by each Case Coordinator in Evanston Township.

In addition, one of Evanston Township’s two budgeted Case Coordinator positions is vacant. The vacancy in the EA/GA Case Coordinator position has most directly impacted the workload of the Executive Director, in effect turning that position into a case manager with supervisory and management responsibilities.

The Novak Consulting Group’s review of the GA and EA processes and their associated time commitments and requirements, as well the workload profile and staffing level of peer townships in Illinois, indicates that the current staffing level is efficient for Evanston Township’s existing book of work.

However, The Novak Consulting Group also reviewed contracting and partnership opportunities that are permissible under State Statute as an avenue to control Township workload and capitalize on the specialized expertise of the non-profit sector. Specifically, we reviewed opportunities relating to the workforce training/job club and Emergency Assistance programs.

The workforce training/job club function is a required element of the GA program, but Townships are permitted to contract or partner with an institution (e.g., local government) or non-profit agency to administer the program. Emergency Assistance, however, is not required under state statute. Rather it is an optional program that can be implemented at the discretion of Township Supervisors, depending on the availability of local financial resources.

In order to assess contracting or partnership opportunities for these programs it is necessary to identify if there are local non-profits or local government departments whose mission and/or staffing level is well matched to the program in question. In the case of the workforce training/job club program, one clear contracting candidate exists in the Illinois Employment and Training Center (IETC), a state agency with offices in Evanston that focusses on workforce development.

In the case of Emergency Assistance, there are two local-non-profits whose mission and/or services match closely with the goals of the Emergency Assistance program; however, discussions would be required to assess their capacity to absorb EA caseload. Those non-profits, which are summarized in the table below, are already partially funded by Evanston Township, so a relationship currently exists.

Table 5: City of Evanston Non-profits with Emergency Assistance Expertise

Non-Profit	Relevant Services
Connections for the Homeless	Provides comprehensive homeless prevention services to residents of Chicago’s North Shore. Connections works with households facing foreclosure or eviction due to arrearages in mortgage, rent, or utilities. Provides initial help to clients in the form of financial aid followed closely with intensive, client-centered support that mixes workshops with one-on-

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	one counseling.
Metropolitan Family Services	Provides support to economically challenged families through a combination of education, training, and counseling services designed to equip clients with the tools to become economically self-sufficient.

In addition to programmatic contracting options, there are also opportunities to realize efficiencies by partnering with the City of Evanston to provide support services such as financial management, payroll, and IT support. These opportunities, coupled with available contracting options, offer opportunities to achieve savings in the Supervisor’s Office, and enhance corporation between the Township, local non-profits, and the City of Evanston.

The Evanston Assessor’s Office staffing is appropriately staffed to meet office coverage and workload requirements. The current two-position staff allows for coverage for breaks and lunch, and allows one staff member to provide their full attention to a phone call or walk-in client, while the other addresses additional requests. This organizational structure creates flexibility that benefits customer service and minimizes staffing requirements. This customer service level is one of the main added values of the Assessor’s Office, as they operate as an alternative to the central Cook County Assessor’s Office, which is located approximately 14 miles from the City of Evanston.

The primary responsibility of the Assessor’s Office is to assist taxpayers with the property tax exemption and appraisal appeal processes. On average, the Assessor’s office assists approximately 700 clients per year with these processes, generating an estimated \$400,000 per year, or an average of \$570 per client, in property tax savings for Evanston residents.⁴ The total budget for the Town Fund in FY2012/2013 is \$366,000.

The Assessor’s Office also makes an intentional effort to go beyond the minimum requirements of the office. For example, on behalf of Evanston residents, Assessor’s Office staff will coordinate with mortgage companies to ensure that escrow accounts properly reflect successful exemptions and appeals.

The tax payer advocacy services provided by the Assessor’s Office are unique and require niche expertise regarding the inner workings of the Cook County Assessor’s Office. The current staff, having had direct experience working for the Cook County Assessor, is familiar with the County’s AS/400 computer system. This allows staff to work from actual County assessment data when dealing with clients. This knowledge, along with an exemplary approach to customer service, has resulted in a high quality service that is available to all property owners in the City of Evanston.

A review of staffing levels, workload and practices, suggests that under the current configuration, the Township Supervisor’s Office and the Assessor’s Office are appropriately staffed for the combination of

⁴ Estimates provided by the Assessor’s Office

state required and non-mandatory service they elect to provide. Township operations have evolved alongside those of the City and there is little direct duplication of services. Thoughtful attention is given by The Supervisor's Office and the Assessor's Office to match staffing levels to workload demands. This is borne out in the benchmark comparisons as well.

However, there are a number of opportunities that can enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of Township operations.

General Assistance and Workforce Training

As part of a General Assistance program, townships are required by Illinois statute to establish a community work program. There are two options to the program: job training and workforce. Clients who are not on GA because of medical inability to work must participate in either a direct worksite placement or be involved in "Job Club." In Evanston Township, the Job Club program is administered in-house by case management personnel.

The clients in Job Club are required to attend a two-hour session on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Those in Job Club are viewed as more "job ready." Some clients who have minimum skills and are in need of "on-the-job training" are placed on worksites to enhance their work skills.

Recommendation 1: Contract for the delivery of workforce training and Job Club to GA clients.

The Job Club and workforce training are part of the few services that the Evanston Township Case Coordinators provide directly. For other services, such as mental health counseling and medical services, Case Coordinators serve primarily as a referral resource, connecting clients with direct service providers in the community with specialized skills.

Though direct performance data was not available from the Supervisor's Office, anecdotal information indicates that the success rate of connecting GA clients with employment is low. This is largely attributable to the generally low level of baseline client job readiness. For example, some GA clients are dealing with mental health issues that must be treated before they can reasonably be expected to maintain employment. In addition, the Evanston Township Case Coordinators' primary role is to ensure that clients meet the conditions of the GA and EA processes, and refer those clients to services in the community. They do not maintain specific expertise in job training and workforce development.

Illinois statute states that Townships "may enter into agreements with local taxing bodies and private not-for-profit organizations, agencies and institutions to provide for the supervision and administration of job search, work and training projects."

This is a model that is employed by other Illinois Townships, including Oak Park Township, one of Evanston Township's peers. Oak Park Township utilizes the Illinois Department of Employment Security for job training service. This is a viable option for Evanston Township because the Illinois Employment and Training Center (IETC), a state agency dedicated to workforce development, has offices in Evanston,

and therefore convenient for GA clients to access. Moreover, the IETC maintains a network of local and state resources that will effectively compound the services available to Evanston Township's GA clients.

According to its website, the Illinois Employment and Training Center, which operates out of the Evanston public library, is marketed as "Evanston's one stop shop for those seeking employment and training to further their careers. Through a partnership of workforce development organizations, the IETC offers a single convenient connection point for job seekers and employers to find each other and tap into a pool of education, training, employment opportunities and unemployment insurance information." The network of services offered at the IETC include a variety of free courses available to residents as well as case management services for those interested in finding a job.

Utilizing the IETC for job training and workforce development programming will offer two important benefits to the Township: 1) it will connect clients with resources that are specifically focused in workforce development, providing greater opportunity to transition GA clients from GA roles to full-time employment, and; 2) it will provide additional case management capacity for Evanston Township's case management personnel.

Emergency Assistance

In addition to the General Assistance program, Evanston Township manages the Emergency Assistance program, which provides residents who are experiencing incidental economic hardship the opportunity to apply for one-time financial resources, up to a maximum of \$1,500 per year. The Emergency Assistance program is not a state required program but state statute allows EA programs to be established with local funds at the discretion of the Township Supervisor. While the EA program has served as an important resource for many Evanston residents, opportunities exist to enhance the effectiveness of the program.

Recommendation 2: Initiate discussions with Connections for the Homeless and Metropolitan Family services to assess the interest and capacity to contract for Emergency Assistance process management.

The Evanston Township EA process, which is summarized in Attachment A, is provided directly by Township staff. The EA process is primarily designed to ensure that clients meet eligibility requirements. If they meet those requirements, and provide the necessary supporting documentation, they are provided a check to cover qualified expenses. The client is then eligible to reapply for EA funds in 365 days.

Though Evanston Township's Case Coordinators will often seek to connect EA clients with other resources in the community, there is not a systematic approach to mitigating the likelihood that the EA client will reapply the following year. In other words, the process is designed to meet the immediate problem but not the fundamental problem(s) that may be contributing to the need to draw on EA resources.

Evanston is home to a number of non-profit agencies that partner with the Township to provide client services. Two of those non-profits – Connections for the Homeless and Metropolitan Family Service— maintain expertise and experience in the field of emergency financial assistance. Moreover, these non-profits not only provide emergency financial support to clients, but seek to connect them with training, education, and resources that will help avoid the need to draw emergency assistance in the future.

Contracting with one or both of these specialized agencies to manage the EA process would allow Evanston Township the opportunity to enhance the services that are provided to EA clients by expanding access to specialized training and services. It would also help to control the caseload of Evanston Township Case Coordinators, providing additional capacity for GA case management.

Service Integration

Evanston Township staff is scheduled to relocate their offices into the Evanston Civic Center in the fall of 2013. This relocation was initiated to reduce Township facility rental expenses and further integrate Township operations with broader municipal operations, providing more initiative access to Township services for all City residents. This relocation also provides the opportunity for additional efficiencies to be gained through integration or service sharing.

To accomplish this task, The Novak Consulting Group first identified those services that, by State statute, the Township is required to provide and evaluated opportunities where efficiencies could be gained through service integration with the City or through contracting. The following table summarizes those services for both the Supervisor’s Office and the Assessor’s Office.

Table 6: Township Service Requirements

Service	Required
General Assistance	Yes
Emergency Assistance	No
Workforce Training	Yes
Taxpayer Advocacy	No

The Novak Consulting Group then reviewed City of Evanston operations to determine if municipal capacity exists to augment, enhance, or incorporate any of the Evanston Township’s workload. Specifically, The Novak Consulting Group conducted a high level assessment of the Community and Economic Development Department, Recreation Department, and the Health Department’s operations to determine like programs and identify opportunities for integration.

While the review revealed some service similarities, the distinctions were far more relevant. For example, the Department of Community and Economic Development focuses heavily on issues related to housing in Evanston; however, those efforts focus primarily on development, rather than specific

individual housing support. This requires a fundamentally different skill set than that required to manage direct social service programs relating to housing. Similarly, the Health Department has transitioned its operating model to move away from direct service provision; instead, it serves primarily as funding arm for specialized health service providers in Evanston. These providers already serve as referral resources for Township Supervisor's Office staff. The Parks, Recreation and Community Services Department provides some job training services to Evanston residents; however, those services are primarily focused on Evanston youth. Again, this is fundamentally different than providing job training and workforce development services for an indigent population. Moreover, discussions with staff from these departments indicate that the internal capacity does not exist to effectively absorb Township operations and develop the requisite expertise to effectively manage the programs.

While there are no clear opportunities for the City to absorb the Township's operations, there are a number of opportunities for the City to provide internal support in the areas of information technology and finance and administration. These opportunities are particularly relevant in light of the Township's planned move to the Evanston Civic Center.

Recommendation 3: Utilize City of Evanston internal support services for the Township's finance and information technology needs.

In late 2013, the Evanston Township will be moving its offices from their current location at the intersection to Main Street and Dodge Avenue to the first floor of the Evanston Civic Center on Ridge Avenue. This move will allow the Township to save some money by no longer leasing commercial property. Additionally, the move will give the Township direct access to the existing, robust internal support services of the City of Evanston. The Township should make use of these services for its finance and information technology needs.

Currently, the Township's accounting, payroll, and information technology needs are managed through a collaboration among Township staff and the use of private contractors. The Township maintains a staffing level of less than 10 positions, and total City staffing is typically between 620 to 640 positions. The addition of Township personnel payroll and financial management responsibilities ultimately represents a fractional increase in the City's workload.

According to the Township's FY2012/2013 Budget, the Township maintains a budget of approximately \$30,000 per year dedicated to contracted IT and finance/accounting support. Transitioning the responsibility for general IT and financial services to the City of Evanston will capitalize on economies of scale and will result in annual Township budget savings of approximately \$30,000 per year.

As the Township transitions to City IT, it will be important for the Township to discuss their support needs and the service levels to which they are accustomed— and for City IT to discuss the strategy for meeting those needs. This can most effectively be accomplished through the execution of a service level agreement at the outset to define the Township's working relationship with City IT. It is also important to note that in the area of IT, the Township Supervisor's Office is responsible for maintaining the department-specific application, Visual GA.

The Township Supervisor primarily relies upon the Office Manager position to maintain the Visual GA system. This practice would be expected to continue after the transition to City of Evanston IT services.

Township Organization Structure

As previously discussed, budgeted program staffing levels at the Supervisor and Assessor's Office are appropriate for the workload volume and current operations profile of Evanston Township. However, considering the contracting recommendations offered above, as well as the efficiencies gained from utilizing the City of Evanston for internal support functions, opportunities exist to reduce total staffing in the Township Supervisor's Office while continuing to meet current workload demands.

Recommendation 4: Fill the Vacant Case Coordinator position.

Budgeted staffing for the Township Supervisor's office includes two Case Coordinators who are charged with managing the Township's GA and EA caseload. Currently, one of the Case Coordinator positions is vacant. As a result, the case management workload is split an estimated 60/40 percent between the existing Case Coordinator and the Executive Director position. A review of peer benchmark townships indicates that the average caseload per Case Coordinator in Evanston Township is comparable to that of peer communities. However, Evanston Township does provide additional in-house services – namely the Emergency Assistance Grant program and the Job Club/workforce training program—that peers do not provide.

Though The Novak Consulting Group recommends contracting the workforce training/Job Club training program, our review of operations and GA case management requirements, as well as peer Township Case Coordinator staffing levels, indicates that the current budgeted case management staffing levels are appropriate. Moreover, filling the Case Coordinator position will provide additional capacity for the Executive Director to take on additional reporting and administrative responsibilities.

Recommendation 5: Eliminate the Confidential Accounts/Personnel Manager position.

Under the current organization structure, the Confidential Accounts/Personnel Manager provides human resources, payroll, banking management, accounts payable, audit preparation and coordination, and building lease liaison services for the Township. With the relocation of Township staff to the Civic Center, building liaison services will no longer be required. By partnering with the City of Evanston for financial management and payroll support, the Township's financial management responsibilities will be significantly reduced. Lastly, by filling the vacant Case Coordinator position, the Executive Director will realize additional capacity that can be applied toward general human resources and financial management.

The following figure summarizes the recommended organization structure for Evanston Township.

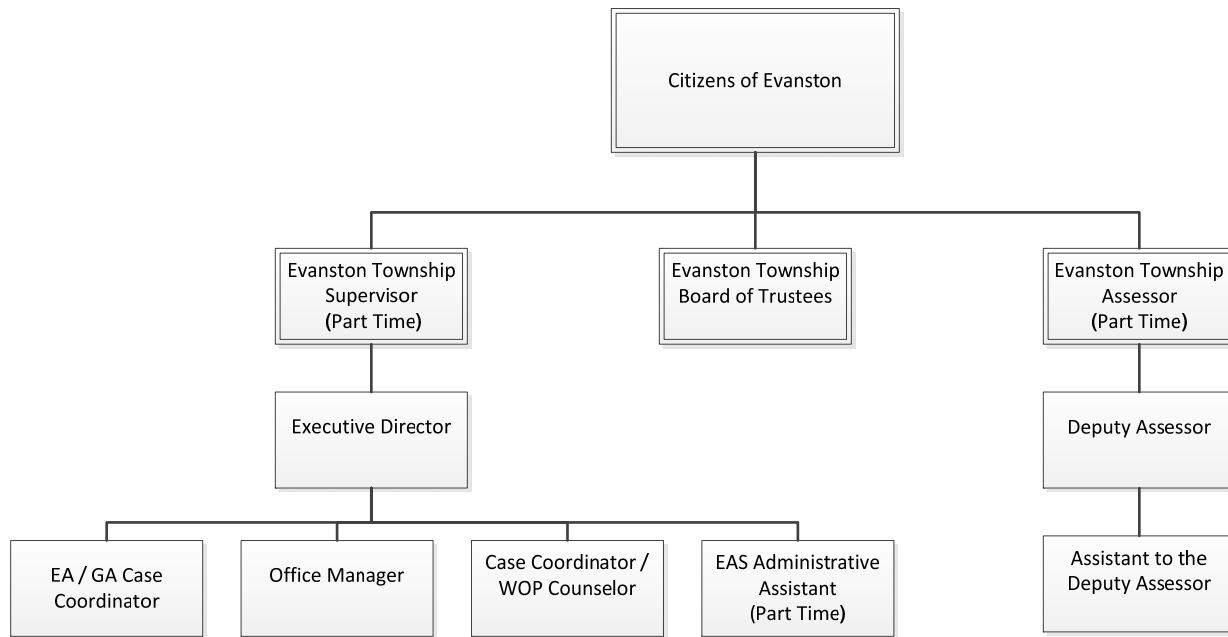


Figure 4: Recommended Organization Structure

Public Awareness

The Supervisor’s Office and the Assessor’s Office each maintain IT applications that are specifically designed to meet their business needs. The Supervisor’s Office has effectively implemented, and relies heavily upon, the Visual GA case management system. The Assessor’s Office primarily utilizes Cook County’s technology infrastructure to support the taxpayer advocacy process but staff is well-versed in the system and is able to proficiently operate within it.

These tools help staff in the Supervisor’s Office and Assessor’s Office to provide a high level of service to clients and customers. However, for the average citizen, it is in fact quite challenging to determine what services are offered by the Township and how those services can accessed.

Recommendation 6: Establish an updated and user-friendly Evanston Township website.

Currently, the City of Evanston’s website includes a brief “thumbnail” sketch of the Township that contains little more than a mission statement and the phone numbers for the Supervisor and Assessor. A separate webpage contains limited information on the General Assistance program, work opportunity program, and other services the Township offers. Because this information is not electronically connected with the Township’s own page it is of limited value. The Township’s web presence is currently geared toward pushing inquiries to phone calls or physical visits to the office. While this method of

service delivery is personal, it is not necessarily efficient. This strategy does not take full advantage of the information dissemination abilities of the internet.

The Evanston Township should develop a strategy to establish a deliberate presence on the web. This strategy should include a reassessment and redesign of the webpages the Township uses to communicate its presence and services to the community. This reassessment should focus on the experience of the user; for example, it is difficult to “find” the Township on the web. The benchmark townships all have clearly branded websites.

The Evanston Township’s lack of a clearly identified website creates an unnecessary impediment to residents wishing to access Township services. The Township may choose to locate this redesigned, comprehensive website within the City’s existing website, expanding its current placement under the “Government” tab on the home page. Alternatively, the Township may choose to follow the lead of the benchmark townships and establish its own, standalone website with a dedicated domain name. In either case, the Township should focus on creating its internet “home” and provide visitors with useful information in an easy-to-understand format. Whatever approach is taken there should be cross references on both websites to help Evanston residents move between the City and Township websites as they look for information on municipal services.

Recommendation 7: Establish a targeted marketing effort to educate Evanston property owners about the Township’s taxpayer advocacy services.

According to data provided by the Assessor’s Office, in 2012 the Assessor’s Office helped over 200 property tax payers in the City of Evanston obtain property tax exemptions. In addition, the office helped over 30 clients coordinate with mortgage companies to adjust their property tax escrow accounts to reflect exemptions, helping Evanston homeowners navigate the often confusing process associated with amending mortgage terms. The Assessor’s office also helps residents navigate the assessment appeal process, often applying niche expertise regarding the Cook County assessment office to provide Evanston residents services that go above and beyond the basic level of customer service.

Currently, the Assessor’s Office actively seeks to build ongoing, multi-year relationships with their clients, especially seniors. Staff makes an effort to contact former clients and remind them of the various homeowner exemption filing deadlines and to offer services to former clients. Though Assessor’s Office staff occasionally make presentations at community centers and the like, the majority of the Assessor’s new clients come in as a result of word-of-mouth marketing. According to the 2010 U.S. Census, approximately 58% of Evanston housing units are owner-occupied. There is a large segment of City of Evanston residents who could benefit from the services offered by the Assessor’s Office.

Improvements to the City’s website will go a long way toward increasing community access to Assessor’s Office programs, but additional targeted marketing efforts should also be implemented. There are a number of best practice approaches that can be applied; however, given staffing levels in the Assessor’s

Office, those efforts should take advantage of existing platforms that cover direct marketing, electronic marketing, and mail-based marketing, described below.

- **Direct Marketing** – Increase the incidence of in-person public marketing at community centers and, specifically, senior centers and events. According to staff, a large percentage of the Assessor’s Office clientele are senior citizens. Increasing the number of presentations and seminars geared toward target populations will increase awareness of the services offered by the Assessor’s Office. Niles Township conducts a lecture series geared toward educating residents about the property tax rules and regulations and Township services. A similar program can be developed in Evanston Township.
- **Electronic Marketing** – Utilize the City of Evanston’s weekly electronic newsletter to market programs at key times of the year. In addition, consider developing an annual electronic newsletter that highlights Township services and accomplishments. New Trier Township has developed an annual Township electronic newsletter that summarizes services and accomplishments in an easy to follow, user-friendly format.
- **Mail Marketing** – Contact the City of Evanston’s Utilities Department to determine if marketing inserts can be developed and included in utility bills during key times of the year.

These initiatives not only serve to enhance public awareness of the Assessor’s programs, but also create operational relationships between Township personnel and City personnel in the recreation, utilities, and the City’s communications apparatus.

Governance

In the State of Illinois there are approximately 20 coterminous townships. Most of these townships are governed by the elected supervisor and assessor but also by separately elected boards of township trustees. In most Illinois townships, the board of township trustees consists of approximately four elected trustees as well as the township supervisor. The board's responsibilities are considerable, and include, but are not limited to, auditing bills, attending to budgeting and levy responsibilities, and setting policy for the Township Supervisor to administer.⁵ These boards exist and operate independent of separately elected, and distinctly charged, municipal councils.

Of the 20 coterminous townships, seven, including Evanston Township, operate under the policy direction of a shared Township/Municipal Board. In these jurisdictions, the municipal council is elected to serve as both municipal council and township board of trustees. This approach serves as an institutional method to ensure that municipal and township policy is closely coordinated. The consequence of this approach is evident in Evanston Township, where the division of labor between the township and the City is clearly demarcated and duplication of services is effectively non-existent. However, this approach to township governance also creates practical challenges.

Recommendation 8: Enhance the coordination of governance strategies and service delivery between Evanston Township and The City of Evanston.

There are a number of steps that can be implemented to enhance coordination and cooperation between the City of Evanston and Evanston Township. However, there are two key initial steps that can be implemented relatively easily to strengthen the governance process.

1. Integrate a Township operations orientation process into the City Manager's Board of Aldermen/Board of Trustees member orientation process.
2. Establish a quarterly meeting between the Board of Trustees, Township executive staff, and City of Evanston executive staff to coordinate services and identify opportunities for collaboration.

One of the challenges of operating under a joint City/Township board is that the City's elected officials often view their primary responsibility as City Council members. This is the result of two important considerations. First, the townships, in addition to the board of trustees, are staffed with separately elected executive positions that are charged with managing day-to-day township operations; this effectively bifurcates policy development responsibilities. Second, in many coterminous townships, the functions of townships are relatively limited in comparison to those of the surrounding municipality. Though the responsibilities of providing policy direction to the City are no more important than those of the Township, the burdens of that responsibility are often heavier due to the comparative volume and complexity of work.

⁵ The Township Officials of Illinois, Laws and Duties Handbook, ed. 2011

Currently, the Evanston Board of Aldermen meets as the Township Board of Trustees twice per year. During the remainder of the year, the Township Supervisor and Township Assessor effectively operate the Township independently, under the general guidance that the Board of Trustees provides at the biannual meetings. This relatively infrequent meeting schedule further exacerbates the aforementioned division.

A best practice that is widely practiced in local governments is a comprehensive orientation process for elected officials. Orientation processes allow for the opportunity to not only educate elected officials regarding operations, finances, and significant policy and operational issues in the community, but it provides an opportunity to engage elected officials in a constructive way, setting a positive tone for future interactions. In Evanston, the City Manager, takes the responsibility for orienting aldermen to Evanston operations. While the City Manager is not responsible for Township operations, broadening the scope of orientation to include the role of Township Trustee would be a valuable addition to the curriculum.

The key areas that should be covered in the orientation would include roles and responsibilities of the elected officials; staffing compliment and responsibility, statutory requirements, and Township budget and revenue. In Evanston Township's specific case, attention should also be given to the role of elected officials in both units of government and to identifying and discussing opportunities for cooperation and coordination. In addition to enhancing the orientation process, the Board of Trustees meetings schedule and agenda can be modified to strengthen governance and cooperation. As mentioned above, the Evanston Board of Aldermen meets twice per year in their role as the Township Board of Trustees. Beyond these meetings, which are primarily used to update the Board of Trustees about Township operations and finances, there is little formal coordination of services and initiatives between the Board of Trustees and Township personnel.

For example, in 2011 the Mayor of Evanston initiated a task force to address issues of homelessness in the City of Evanston. The principle responsibility of the Township Assessor's Office is to provide GA and EA to the low income and indigent population in Evanston. Their clientele are people and families who are homeless or on the brink of homelessness. In addition to providing direct services, Case Coordinators at the Supervisor's Office serve as a referral resource, connecting clients with social services in the area. As a result, they have formed close working relationships with various social service providers in the community. Though Township staff maintains this expertise, they did not participate or contribute to the Mayor's task force.

More frequent and intentional interaction between the Board of Trustees, Township staff, and City staff will help the City identify additional opportunities to coordinate services. To identify the most appropriate model that could be applied in Evanston, The Novak Consulting Group initiated conversations with five of Illinois' seven coterminous townships that operate under a joint municipal/township board. That research indicates that there are a number of approaches utilized throughout the state, ranging from bi-annual meetings to monthly meetings. The following table summarizes the meeting schedule and approach utilized in those townships were data was available.

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Table 7: Meeting Schedule – Coterminous Townships with Shared Municipal/Township Boards

Township	Township Board Meeting Schedule/Approach
Bloomington Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Council includes township items/issues on monthly City Council agendas. • Meetings are utilized to review and discuss township business and hear reports from the Supervisor and Assessor regarding operations. • Additional meetings may be called for special items, such as the construction of new township facilities. • Township Board of Trustees holds annual Township meeting
Galesburg Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of every bi-weekly City Council meeting, the Council adjourns and reconvenes as the Township Board to discuss Township business. • In addition, Township Trustees hold annual Township meeting.
Godfrey Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village holds two Village Council meetings per month; the first meeting begins with Township business. Equates to 12 Township meetings per year. • Township board may call special meetings as needed.
Macomb City Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Township business is addressed once a quarter during a City Council meeting of the whole.
Zion Township	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Village holds two Village Council meetings per month; the first meeting begins with Township business. • Supervisor chairs Township meeting; Mayor chairs City Council meeting.

Though there are a number of different approaches utilized to integrate the dual role of Municipal Councils and Township Boards of Trustees, these approaches are customized based on the individual preferences of the community. In Evanston there is a specific desire, on the part of the citizenry, staff, and elected officials, to facilitate greater cooperation between the Township and the City.

Establishing a quarterly special meeting to discuss and prioritize joint initiatives and provide direction to both Township staff and City staff will serve this interest without fundamentally altering the governance structure. Moreover, it will provide an opportunity for the Board of Trustees to hear about Township operations and provide policy guidance on a more frequent basis.

Summary of Staffing and Financial Impact

As discussed in more detail throughout this report, the current staffing levels in the Township are relatively lean given the amount of work the Supervisor’s and Assessor’s Offices produce. However, this analysis did identify a potential staffing efficiency given a change in current workload brought on by the

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Township's impending move to the Civic Center this fall as well as associated non-personnel savings through the elimination of information technology and finance/accounting support contracts. The following table summarizes the staffing and financial impact associated with implementing these initiatives.

Table 8: Summary of Staffing and Financial Impact

Action/Recommendation	Summary of FTE Change	Summary of Cost Savings
Annual Lease Savings Associated with Relocating Township Offices to the Civic Center	-	\$72,000
Eliminate the Confidential Accounts/Personnel Manager position.	(1.0)	\$59,000
Utilize City of Evanston internal support services for the Township's finance and information technology needs.	-	\$30,000
TOTAL	(1.0)	\$161,000

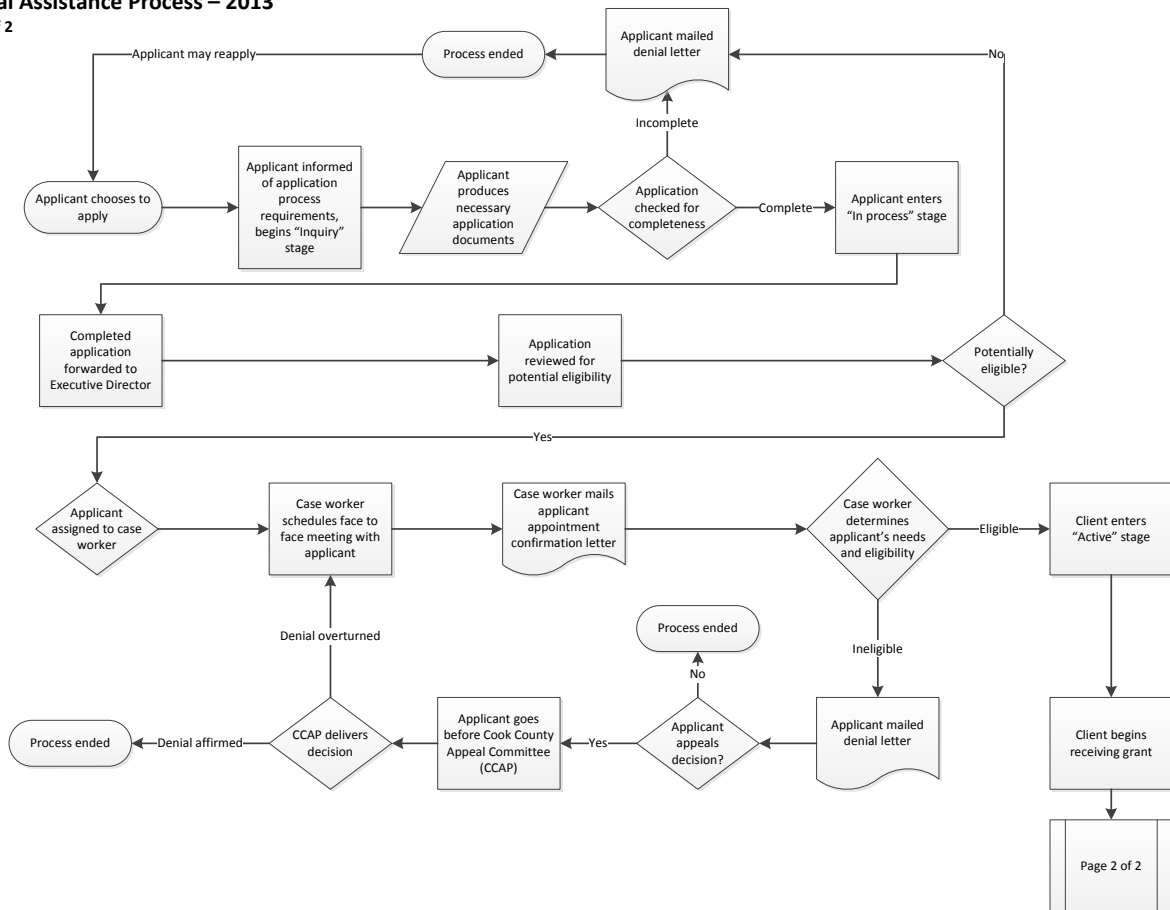
Conclusion

The Novak Consulting Group's review of Evanston Township produced 9 recommendations to enhance the efficiency of Township operations, increase public awareness of public services, and provide greater cooperation and coordination between the City of Evanston and Evanston Township. These recommendations provide a starting point to encourage creative thinking about other ways in which the Township may implement best practices while continuing to provide important services to the residents of Evanston. The commitment demonstrated by both City and Township personnel during this process signals strong potential for successful implementation of these recommendations.

Attachment A – General Assistance and Emergency Assistance Process Maps

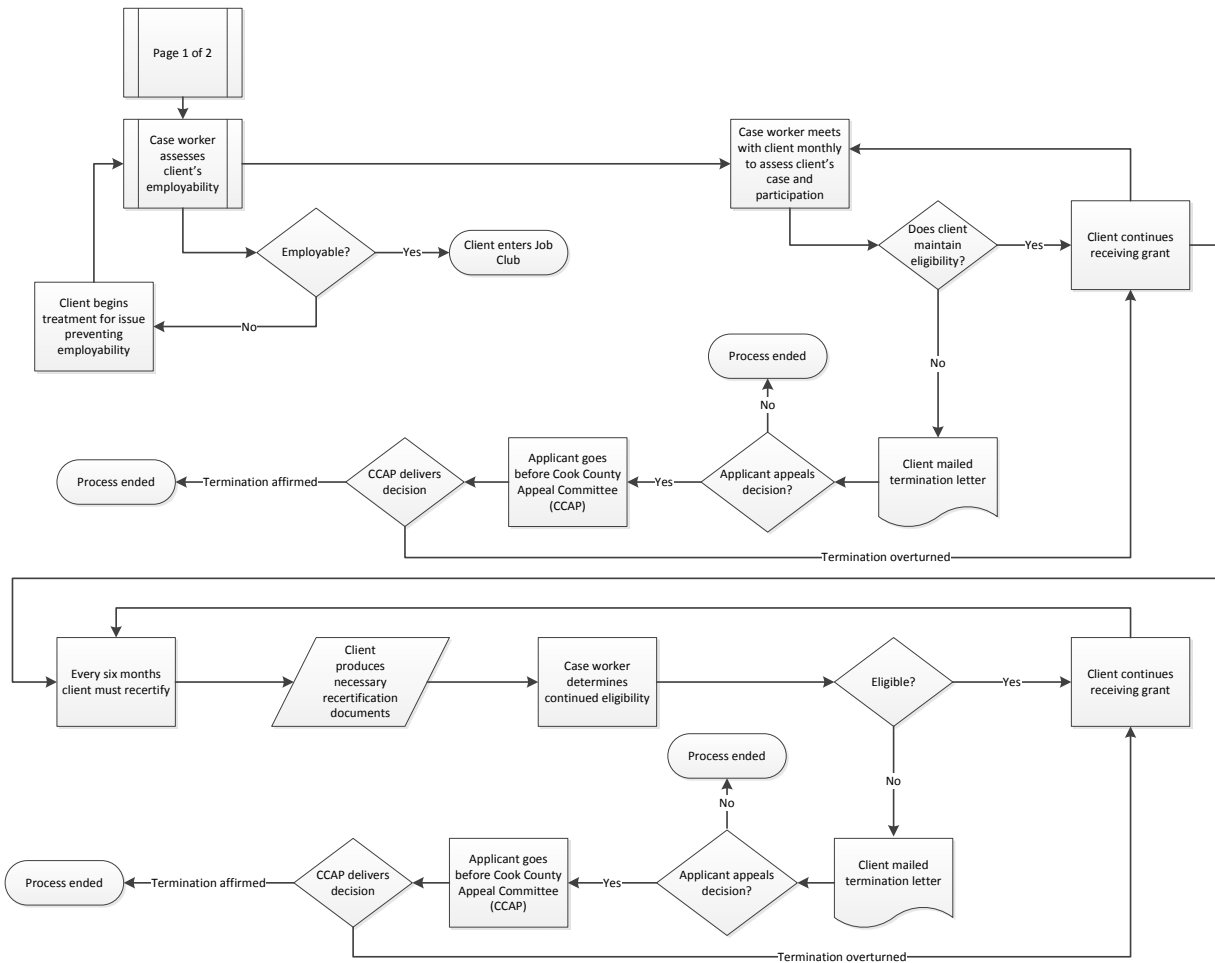
General Assistance Process – 2013

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General Assistance Process – 2013

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Emergency Assistance Process – 2013

