


REORGANIZATION AND EFFICIENCY TASKFORCES/COMMISSIONS OF OTHER STATES

Government Restructuring Taskforce
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Many states are into their third year of fiscal crisis. With the easiest budget cuts already made, states are looking for structural changes to improve efficiency in government.

Purpose and Methodology

- Purpose: glean ideas, themes and lessons for this taskforce to consider.
- LFC Staff researched taskforces and commissions convened in other states to review government functions and achieve savings by improving efficiency, set priorities, reorganize government, and increase accountability.
- The staff reviewed commissions and taskforces in:
 - Colorado
 - Hawaii
 - Iowa
 - Michigan
 - Nevada
 - New Jersey
 - Utah
 - Vermont

Leading Research Suggests

National Governor's Association, "The Big Reset"

- Use the crisis to propose major changes that would not be entertained in the past
- The process needs sufficient time and political commitment: Focus these resources on areas that present greatest return.
- Address structural change to permanently lower costs; not just temporary cuts or reductions
- Consider elimination of programs or services, not just reductions.
- Reorganization only saves money if it eliminates duplication of functions – FTE, contracts and operating costs.
- Optimize technology within and across agencies.

Leading Research Suggests

Deloitte Public Leadership Institute and Ash Institute at Harvard University:

- Enlist as many stakeholders as possible
- Establish bi-partisan leadership
- Build executive and legislative consensus
- Develop a solid deadline and implementation plan
- Be careful not to reinvent the wheel by inventorying past efforts and using them as a starting point
- Choose a manageable scope and focus on widely recognized challenges
- Leave a process in place to periodically review the need for agencies

Things to Consider: Getting Ideas

- Solicit input from civil servants
- Develop a process to receive public input from clients and other stakeholders
- Create a website to disseminate information and collect ideas from the public and other stakeholders

Other State Experiences:

- Colorado and Nevada anonymously polled state workers for ideas
- New Jersey set up a public e-mail address and thoroughly reviewed suggestions
- Iowa created a website the public could use to make suggestions
- Vermont's initial closed-door approach, with help of a consultant, produced a focused report; however, it was subject to criticism for excluding some groups.
- Utah was criticized for barring public access at its meetings

Things to Consider: Setting a Workplan (i.e. a Focus)

- Topics can be arranged by budget/appropriation category or by topical areas such as E-Government, Procurement
- To cover more ground, appoint subcommittees
- Setting a savings target and expectation for improved service, or evaluate proposals individually

Other State Experiences:

- Nevada identified horizontal, i.e. common across all agencies, and vertical services. Subcommittees were formed for each vertical and horizontal issue area.

- Colorado examined services across government – IT, Health care, revenue collection, customer service.

- Hawaii appointed subcommittees to receive input from state employees and the public. The full committee adopted subcommittee recommendations.

- Vermont set reduced appropriation and outcome expectations upfront

- Michigan set a three phase plan: fact finding, issue development, and final recommendations.

Things to Consider: The Report and Implementation

- Consider what role to play in the implementation of recommendations
- Each report included recommendations for either executive or legislative consideration, some with specific action items
- Some reports included specific directives to agencies that did not need statutory changes
- Other reports included observations and comments worthy of further study
- Consider organizing the recommendations around short/medium/long term

Other State Experiences:

- Iowa issued directives to executive agencies around alternative work schedules and telecommuting.

- Nevada learned to be careful about making recommendations that just transferred fiscal burdens; members needed more education about the state's revenue structure.

- Nevada's final report noted a lack-of-will to revisit the usefulness of a program, tax, or credit once enacted.

- Vermont's report became law and requires quarterly reporting by the administration on progress in achieving savings and results.

- New Jersey established a permanent committee to continue its work with local governments.