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Profile in Local Government Service Delivery Choices, 1997

The *Profile in Local Government Service Delivery Choices* surveys were mailed in fall 1997 and spring 1998 to the Chief Administrative Officers in municipalities with populations 10,000 and over and to the Chief Administrative Officers of counties with populations 25,000. In addition, a random sample of one in eight municipalities from 2,500 to 9,999 in population and one in eight counties with populations 2,500 to 24,999 and from those local governments under 2,500 that are recognized by ICMA. Of the 4,952 municipalities and counties that received surveys, 1,586 responded (32.0%).

For more information on the ICMA's *Profile in Local Government Service Delivery Choices* survey, please contact [Survey Research](#).



[Click here to buy the complete dataset from bookstore.icma.org.](http://bookstore.icma.org)

Following is the survey text with the aggregate results shown next to each answer. Each answer represents the percentage reporting for that question, except where noted.

1. Has your local government studied the feasibility of adopting private service delivery within the past five years?

65.7 Yes
34.3 No

If **yes** which of the following factors spurred your local government's decision?

44.4 External fiscal pressures
88.6 Internal attempts to decrease costs
11.1 State or federal mandates
24.5 Change in political climate
7.1 Active citizen group favoring privatization
21.0 Unsolicited proposals by potential vendors
11.8 Concerns about government liability
9.7 Other

2. Who inside your local government was involved in evaluating

86.6 Manager/CAO
33.2 Assistant Manager/Asst CAO
27.2 Management and/or budget analysts
77.6 Department heads
49.6 Finance/accounting officer
30.7 Attorney
17.6 Procurement/purchasing officer
14.4 Line employees
53.9 Elected officials
5.3 Other

3. Who outside your local government was involved in evaluating the feasibility of private sector delivery?

62.4 Potential service delivers
46.5 Professional/consultants with expertise
15.1 Service recipients/consumers
23.1 Managers/CAO of other local governments
24.9 Citizen advisory committees
9.8 State agencies, leagues, or associations
4.7 Other

4. Has your local government undertaken any activities to ensure success in implementing private sector delivery?

47.0 Yes
53.0 No

If **yes** which of the following activities has your government undertaken to ensure success in implementing private sector delivery?

64.5 Identified successful uses of private service delivery.
10.6 Established a citizens' advisory committee
29.5 Hired consultants to analyze feasibility of private alternatives
33.3 Allowed government departments to compete with private sector
26.2 Developed programs to minimize effect on displaced employees
7.6 Recommended changes in state laws
4.7 Recommended changes in local laws
27.0 Proposed implementation a trial basis
23.4 Applied private alternatives to new services
26.3 Applied private alternatives to growing services
15.6 Surveyed citizens
22.6 Kept the service complaint mechanism in-house
5.8 Other

5. Has your local government encountered any obstacle in adopting private service delivery?

45.3 Yes
54.7 No

If **yes** which of the following obstacles have been encountered?

30.1 Opposition from citizens
42.4 Opposition from elected officials
60.3 Opposition from local government line employees
32.0 Opposition from department heads
31.0 Restrictive labor contracts/agreements
17.0 Legal constraints
25.6 Insufficient supply of competent private deliverer
12.3 Lack of staff sufficient expertise
22.1 Lack of empirical evidence on the effectiveness
16.5 Lack of precedent
4.8 Other

6. Does your local government use any techniques to systematically evaluate its private service delivery?

45.8 Yes
54.2 No

- A. Which of the following aspects of service delivery are evaluated?
 - 58.5 Citizen satisfaction
 - 83.6 Cost
 - 80.4 Compliance with delivery standards
 - 4.9 Other
- B. What techniques are used the service delivery
 - 28.4 Conducting citizen surveys
 - 69.2 Monitoring citizen complaints
 - 65.5 Conducting field observations
 - 74.1 Analyzing data/records
 - 5.5 Other
- 7. Does your community sell assets to create non-tax revenue?
 - 44.2 Yes
 - 54.2 No
- A. If **yes** what do you sell?
 - 28.1 Government data
 - 6.9 Government data through on-line services
 - 12.0 Government memorabilia
 - 78.8 Franchises for the use of rights-of-way
 - 26.7 Other
- 8. Has your community created/entered into any of the following structures?
 - 22.6 Non-profit subsidiary
 - 3.2 For-profit subsidiary
 - 44.6 Joint powers agreement
 - 70.9 Local cooperative purchasing agreement
 - 3.3 National cooperative agreement

	Currently provided by your government	No longer provided by your government	Never been provided by your government	Your employees entirely	Your employees in part	Another government or authority	Private for profit	Private non-profit	Franchises/ concessions	Subsidies	Volunteers
Public Works/ Transportation											
Residential solid waste collection	62.5%	8.5%	29.0%	36.8%	8.5%	3.1%	48.8%	0.2%	14.2%	0.7%	0.2%
Commercial solid waste collection	46.5%	11.2%	42.3%	23.1%	11.4%	3.4%	60.1%	0.2%	16.9%	0.2%	0.0%
Solid waste disposal	58.1%	13.9%	28.0%	30.0%	9.9%	20.5%	40.4%	0.4%	7.4%	0.6%	0.0%
Street repair	92.5%	0.6%	6.8%	39.3%	54.2%	6.3%	34.4%	0.4%	0.3%	0.1%	0.3%
Street/parking lot cleaning	78.8%	1.7%	19.5%	67.5%	19.2%	3.1%	19.5%	0.5%	0.6%	0.1%	0.4%
Snow plowing/sanding	71.3%	0.4%	28.3%	71.3%	24.3%	6.3%	13.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Traffic sign/signal installation/maintenance	86.9%	1.5%	11.6%	50.6%	35.7%	14.6%	23.6%	0.3%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%
Parking meter maintenance and collection	21.8%	13.9%	64.4%	74.9%	11.8%	9.1%	10.1%	1.0%	0.3%	0.3%	1.0%
Tree trimming and planting on public rights on way	82.5%	2.5%	14.9%	40.2%	46.5%	4.3%	35.9%	1.5%	1.0%	0.0%	2.8%
Maintenance and administration of cemeteries	37.0%	2.9%	60.0%	64.4%	13.6%	7.0%	14.0%	8.5%	0.0%	0.4%	4.2%
Inspection/code enforcement	93.2%	0.6%	6.2%	82.4%	13.9%	4.9%	7.7%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.2%
Operation of parking lots and garages	32.5%	2.1%	65.4%	67.5%	14.7%	7.4%	15.4%	2.3%	1.4%	0.7%	0.2%
Operation/maintenance of bus transit system	26.0%	3.3%	70.8%	22.5%	11.4%	44.4%	22.0%	8.5%	1.3%	3.4%	0.0%
Operation/maintenance of paratransit system	24.5%	2.6%	72.9%	20.6%	17.1%	36.0%	22.3%	15.7%	0.9%	5.1%	2.9%
Operation of airports	33.0%	2.5%	64.4%	34.3%	20.8%	33.0%	18.8%	1.1%	5.3%	2.3%	1.1%
Water distribution	60.7%	1.9%	37.4%	74.6%	8.3%	14.9%	7.3%	0.9%	0.5%	0.2%	0.0%
Water treatment	60.7%	1.9%	37.4%	69.8%	6.6%	22.1%	5.1%	0.9%	0.4%	0.2%	0.1%
Sewage collection and treatment	69.1%	2.8%	28.0%	59.3%	17.2%	27.2%	7.9%	0.4%	0.8%	0.2%	0.0%
Disposal of sludge	56.8%	4.0%	39.3%	41.9%	13.1%	25.8%	27.5%	0.7%	0.5%	0.5%	0.0%
Disposal of hazardous materials	40.3%	3.5%	56.2%	18.9%	22.5%	35.6%	37.4%	1.8%	1.4%	1.6%	1.4%
Public Utilities											
Utility operation and management: electricity	24.1%	1.4%	74.5%	36.7%	4.1%	12.3%	39.6%	2.9%	11.7%	0.6%	0.3%
Utility operation and management: gas	17.1%	1.5%	81.3%	18.4%	0.4%	9.8%	56.9%	3.1%	16.1%	0.4%	0.0%
Utility meter reading	53.4%	1.7%	44.9%	73.4%	5.5%	5.6%	17.5%	0.7%	1.7%	0.3%	0.0%
Utility billing	57.1%	1.2%	41.7%	78.7%	6.9%	5.7%	12.7%	0.4%	1.1%	0.3%	0.1%
Public Safety											
Crime prevention/patrol	96.2%	0.3%	3.5%	89.1%	6.6%	6.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%
Police/fire communications	93.6%	2.1%	4.4%	73.4%	11.6%	19.4%	0.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.2%	1.7%
Fire prevention suppression	81.8%	2.0%	16.3%	71.3%	10.4%	10.0%	0.6%	1.9%	0.1%	0.3%	15.1%
Emergency Medical service	72.9%	3.7%	23.5%	46.5%	19.9%	15.7%	15.6%	7.6%	1.5%	0.7%	10.5%
Ambulance service	60.7%	4.4%	34.9%	37.2%	11.2%	13.5%	27.8%	9.1%	2.7%	1.3%	10.5%
Traffic control / parking enforcement	83.9%	0.8%	15.3%	86.5%	7.4%	7.7%	1.5%	0.4%	0.0%	0.1%	1.5%
Vehicle towing and storage	51.0%	2.7%	46.3%	8.1%	9.3%	4.1%	78.7%	3.6%	4.0%	0.0%	0.0%

	Currently provided by your government	No longer provided by your government	Never been provided by your government	Your employees entirely	Your employees in part	Another government or authority	Private for profit	Private non-profit	Franchises/ concessions	Subsidies	Volunteers
Health and Human Services											
Sanitary inspection	55.1%	2.9%	42.0%	55.0%	10.0%	36.4%	3.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.1%
Insect/rodent control	45.5%	3.8%	50.8%	40.2%	14.8%	35.8%	20.0%	1.8%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%
Animal control	81.3%	4.0%	14.7%	56.9%	13.5%	21.2%	7.5%	9.6%	0.3%	0.8%	1.7%
Operation of animal shelters	59.4%	4.3%	36.3%	36.1%	9.4%	25.8%	10.5%	23.4%	0.1%	1.9%	4.6%
Operation of daycare facilities	20.5%	2.2%	77.4%	16.0%	10.5%	16.7%	48.3%	31.0%	0.7%	3.4%	3.1%
Child welfare programs	29.9%	1.6%	68.5%	23.1%	23.1%	51.4%	7.9%	19.2%	0.2%	3.6%	5.0%
Programs for the elderly	59.8%	1.4%	38.7%	26.1%	41.6%	31.6%	8.1%	25.7%	0.5%	4.7%	13.7%
Operation/management of hospitals	17.5%	4.1%	78.5%	5.1%	3.9%	35.7%	35.7%	35.7%	0.0%	1.2%	3.5%
Public health programs	41.0%	2.1%	56.9%	27.0%	24.2%	48.8%	16.1%	14.0%	0.5%	2.5%	4.6%
Drug and alcohol treatment programs	30.7%	1.8%	67.5%	10.8%	22.1%	42.1%	20.5%	35.3%	0.9%	5.4%	4.7%
Operation of mental health/mental retardation programs and facilities	27.3%	1.6%	71.0%	10.4%	18.4%	57.3%	16.6%	28.2%	0.5%	5.4%	3.6%
Prisons/jails	53.2%	6.3%	40.5%	52.5%	12.6%	40.2%	2.7%	0.7%	0.0%	0.3%	0.4%
Operation of homeless shelters	19.1%	1.8%	79.1%	1.7%	5.6%	33.1%	5.2%	60.6%	0.7%	6.6%	9.1%
Parks and Recreation											
Operation and maintenance of recreation facilities	88.9%	1.3%	9.8%	69.7%	21.8%	10.8%	9.8%	4.9%	1.8%	0.5%	5.1%
Parks landscaping and maintenance	88.9%	1.0%	10.1%	65.9%	24.7%	8.4%	17.8%	2.2%	0.5%	0.3%	4.1%
Operation of convention centers and auditoriums	27.9%	1.4%	70.6%	55.8%	12.1%	21.7%	14.2%	8.3%	2.3%	1.8%	1.6%
Cultural and Arts Programs											
Operation of cultural and arts programs	40.6%	1.2%	58.2%	22.2%	34.1%	16.8%	6.7%	35.7%	1.1%	7.0%	21.1%
Operation of libraries	61.6%	2.3%	36.1%	49.6%	11.1%	36.0%	0.9%	4.8%	0.0%	3.8%	6.5%
Operation of museums	32.0%	1.3%	66.7%	14.9%	18.1%	23.8%	5.4%	39.4%	0.5%	7.0%	19.7%
Support Functions											
Buildings and grounds maintenance	96.3%	0.6%	3.1%	58.8%	37.6%	1.8%	26.3%	1.6%	0.4%	0.0%	1.1%
Building security	66.5%	1.2%	32.3%	72.1%	15.6%	2.1%	18.5%	1.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%
Fleet management/vehicle maintenance											
Heavy equipment	90.6%	1.2%	8.2%	51.8%	40.9%	1.4%	32.5%	2.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%
Emergency vehicles	84.5%	1.8%	13.7%	48.5%	39.6%	3.1%	33.8%	2.8%	0.4%	0.2%	0.8%
All other vehicles	89.6%	1.0%	9.4%	52.9%	38.2%	1.9%	31.8%	2.1%	0.3%	0.0%	0.2%
Payroll	98.2%	0.6%	1.2%	90.5%	5.7%	1.0%	5.8%	0.3%	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Tax assessing	66.5%	3.6%	29.9%	51.8%	11.4%	38.7%	6.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%	0.0%
Data processing	92.0%	0.5%	7.5%	75.5%	20.3%	3.5%	15.0%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Collection of delinquent taxes	71.1%	3.2%	25.7%	51.3%	17.3%	29.1%	14.4%	0.9%	0.4%	0.1%	0.0%
Title records/plat map maintenance	62.9%	2.0%	35.1%	55.7%	16.8%	31.1%	8.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.1%
Legal services	80.0%	1.1%	18.9%	35.7%	27.9%	3.0%	50.9%	2.4%	0.7%	0.0%	0.0%

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Secretarial services	88.5%	0.4%	11.1%	89.5%	9.8%	0.2%	7.0%	0.6%	0.3%	0.0%	0.4%
Personnel services	91.1%	0.3%	8.6%	89.9%	8.4%	1.1%	6.8%	1.1%	0.1%	0.0%	0.1%
Public relations/public information	86.5%	0.8%	12.6%	81.7%	15.5%	1.3%	9.3%	2.1%	0.1%	0.0%	1.2%