CLOSUP receives Kellogg grant to analyze priorities, goals among state government officials

ANN ARBOR, Mich.—A research center at the University of Michigan’s Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy will survey elected officials statewide to get their perspectives on policy issues.

The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) received a 12-month W. K. Kellogg Foundation grant for a statewide analysis of Michigan local government efforts. This analysis will focus on the challenges of economic and workforce development in the current economic downturn.

The $162,804 grant supports the launching of CLOSUP’s Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS), a new ongoing survey of local government leaders in every Michigan county, city, township and village. MPPS, the first of its kind nationwide, consists of two Web-based surveys per year, with paper surveys provided to respondents as needed.

MPPS surveys will cover issues such as civil society and civic engagement, local-state governmental relations, regional governance, privatization, ethics, policy priorities, local finances, and more.

"MPPS is designed to fill a critical gap of information to help improve policymaking and thereby improve the quality of life in communities statewide" said Brian Jacob, CLOSUP director.

While much is known about the policy priorities, concerns and goals of Michigan's citizens and business leaders, little is known about the views and priorities of the local officials who play key leadership roles in every community throughout the state, Jacob said. The MPPS will provide this information.

The surveys will:

--Provide local public officials with a better understanding of the views and priorities of their peers across the state, as well as programs being developed in similar communities to meet today's challenges.

--Enhance opportunities for intergovernmental/regional cooperation and coordination.

--Identify best practices for fiscal management and economic and workforce development.

--Give state-level policymakers a clear and comprehensive view of the priorities and challenges facing different communities across Michigan and highlight the commonalities and differences across regions and community types.

--Increase government transparency by gathering detailed information about local decision making processes and initiatives, thus providing nonprofits, foundations, and community groups with a key resource to enhance opportunities for civic engagement.

--Make possible analyses of convergence and divergence between the attitudes of Michigan's local political leaders and Michigan's citizens and business leaders on issues of fiscal policy, service provision, and economic development in their communities.

The surveys are designed and conducted in partnership with the Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Municipal League, and Michigan Townships Association.

CLOSUP conducts, supports and fosters high-quality applied academic research that informs local, state, and urban policy issues. The center functions as an information resource for policymakers and practitioners, academics, students, the media, and the public.

The W.K. Kellogg Foundation, established in 1930, supports children, families and communities as they strengthen and create conditions that propel vulnerable children to achieve success as individuals and as contributors to the larger community and society.

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