

The Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy

Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy >> University of Michigan

Michigan Public
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Improving communication, building trust are seen as keys to fixing relationships between local jurisdictions and the State government

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This report presents the opinions of Michigan's local government leaders regarding the relationships between their local jurisdictions and the State government, including particular factors that affect State-local relations, how those relations could be improved, and levels of trust. The findings in this report are based on statewide surveys of local government leaders in the Fall 2016 wave of the Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS).

>> The Michigan Public Policy Survey (MPPS) is a census survey of all 1,856 general purpose local governments in Michigan conducted by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) at the University of Michigan in partnership with the Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Townships Association, and Michigan Association of Counties. The MPPS takes place twice each year and investigates local officials' opinions and perspectives on a variety of important public policy issues. Respondents for the Fall 2016 wave of the MPPS include county administrators, board chairs, and clerks; city mayors, managers, and clerks; village presidents, managers, and clerks; and township supervisors, managers, and clerks from 1,315 jurisdictions across the state.

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Key Findings

- Local leaders' assessments of their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the State government are mixed, with 49% rating these relations as only fair (36%) or poor (13%), and 46% saying they are good (40%) or excellent (6%).
 - Leaders from Michigan's county governments, officials from the Upper Peninsula, and self-identified Independent local leaders are the most likely to say their jurisdiction's overall relations with the State are poor.
- Issues of concern to a majority of local leaders include beliefs that:
 - the State is taking too much authority away from local governments (70%);
 - the State holds local jurisdictions to a higher standard than it holds itself (67%);
 - the State plays favorites, treating some local jurisdictions better than others (57%);
 - the system of funding Michigan local governments negatively impacts State-local relations (56%);
 - and, the State government's decision-making is not transparent (50%).
- Three factors stand out as particularly important when it comes to how local leaders view their jurisdiction's relationship with the State government:
 - whether they believe State government officials value local leaders' input (43% say yes, 35% say no);
 - whether they believe communication between the State and local officials is positive (31%) or negative (17%);
 - and, whether they trust the State government to do what is right (only 22% do trust the State nearly always or most of the time).
- When asked what State officials can do to improve relations with local governments, most local leaders focus on issues of communication, suggesting State officials need to more frequently reach out to local governments to seek input and feedback. The next most common set of responses focus on issues related to finances, including the need to increase revenue for local governments after years of reduced and constrained revenues.
- And when asked what local leaders themselves can do to improve relations with the State, the most common set of their suggestions also focuses on communications, including suggestions that local leaders need to take the initiative to educate and inform State officials with local perspectives. The next most common set of responses suggest local leaders need to become or stay educated themselves on current policy and State government issues.

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Background

Public service delivery in local communities is based in a complex web of constitutional, fiscal, political, organizational, and personal relationships between state and local governments and their employees. But these complex relationships themselves are based on a simple fact: state governments are supreme to local governments.

In the American federal system, local governments sit at the “bottom of the food chain.” According to the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, “The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the States, are reserved to the States respectively, or to the people.” In fact, the Constitution does not even mention local governments, leaving state governments to create and control their own local jurisdictions. In addition, the U.S. Supreme Court has twice upheld “Dillon’s Rule,” first established in 1868, which limits authority of local jurisdictions to only those provided to them by their state governments. Dillon’s Rule asserts that local governments (a.k.a. “municipal corporations”) can “exercise only the powers explicitly granted to them [by the state], those necessarily or fairly implied in or incident to the powers expressly granted, and those essential to the declared objects and purposes of the corporation, not simply convenient, but indispensable.”¹

Over time, as local governance grew more complex, the original application of Dillon’s Rule became increasingly unwieldy in many ways, requiring specific state approvals of more and more local government activities. Partly in response to these challenges, many states began adopting “Home Rule” approaches starting in the early 20th Century, providing greater authority to local governments (defined on a state-by-state basis), thereby freeing state governments from burdensome involvement in local affairs.

Michigan is one of 39 states that follow Dillon’s Rule.² However, in practice there are gray areas and overlap when considering how much autonomy local governments have, whether they follow Dillon’s Rule or Home Rule. According to the Sunlight Foundation, “A city can have Home Rule but be in a state that applies Dillon’s Rule, for example. This is the case in Michigan: the state’s constitution gives local governments the power to adopt charters and have Home Rule, but it also employs Dillon’s Rule by setting some guidelines for how municipalities operate.”³ And according to the Brookings Institution, “Dillon’s Rule and Home Rule states are not polar opposites. No state reserves all power to itself, and none devolves all of its authority to localities. Virtually every local government possesses some degree of local autonomy and every state legislature retains some degree of control over local governments.”⁴

Regardless of whether states apply Dillon’s or Home Rule to their localities, across the country there appears to be a growing tension between states and many of their local governments, with more and more state governments preempting local authority on a range of policy issues, preventing local actions such as adoption of anti-discrimination laws, bans on plastic shopping bags, regulation of ride sharing services like Uber and Lyft, and more.⁵ In Michigan, State preemption has been a focus recently in the areas of taxation and revenue,⁶ local minimum wage laws,⁷ local government discussion of ballot issues,⁸ and the Emergency Manager law.⁹ In fact, a recent National League of Cities study on seven different policy topics finds Michigan is one of seven states with the most frequently imposed state preemption of local authority.¹⁰

So local governments, including those in Michigan, are clearly subordinate to their state governments. And yet public service delivery in many ways depends on both levels of government coordinating and cooperating with each other. In turn, these actions depend not only on organizational relationships, but also on inter-personal relationships between and among state and local government officials. What has emerged is a complex web of relationships that in large part helps define local governance.

To learn more about how local leaders view these issues, the Fall 2016 MPPS asked Michigan’s local leaders a wide range of questions about the relationships between their jurisdiction and Michigan’s State government, including issues of State preemption, transparency, funding, communication, the behavior of State and local officials, and more.



Mixed assessments on the condition of State-local relations in Michigan

Looking statewide, relations between local governments and the State show signs of strain, according to local leaders. As shown in *Figure 1a*, nearly half (49%) of local leaders rate their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the State government as only fair (36%) or even poor (13%), while slightly fewer (46%) say it is either good (40%) or excellent (6%).

There are variations in these assessments of the State-local relationship among different types of jurisdictions, with county officials somewhat more pessimistic than others. For example, 60% of county officials say their county government's overall relations with the State are only fair or poor, compared with 47% of township officials (see *Figure 1b*). In many ways, county governments are a bridge between the state government and other local governments (e.g., cities, villages, and townships). As described in an MSU Extension report, "County governments exist to extend some powers of state government throughout the state ... but counties are local governments as well."¹¹ So it is possible that, as the nearest "local" government to the State government, counties may have more opportunities for conflict with the State.

The MPPS often finds significant differences based on jurisdiction population size, but in this case the pattern is less clear. Both Michigan's smallest jurisdictions (those with less than 1,500 residents) and the largest jurisdictions (those with more than 30,000) report slightly worse relations with the State government, compared with mid-sized jurisdictions (see *Figure 1c*). It may be the case that these largest and smallest jurisdictions face their own unique issues that may put them particularly at odds with the State. For example, among the smallest jurisdictions, conflicts may arise over natural resource policies, especially in northern regions of the state where major portions of land are owned by the State. And for the largest jurisdictions, cuts to statutory revenue sharing by the State may be more common than among small jurisdictions, adding new sources of strain to the relationship.

Figure 1a

Local leaders' assessments of their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the State government

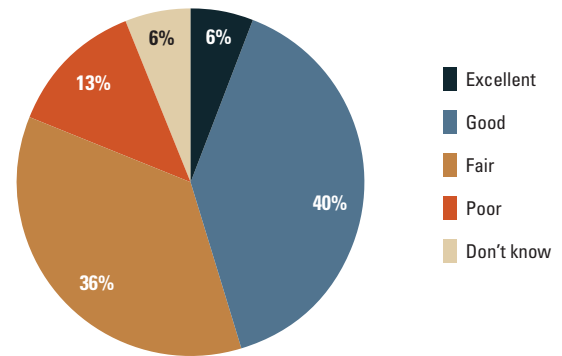


Figure 1b

Local leaders' assessments of their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the State government, by jurisdiction type

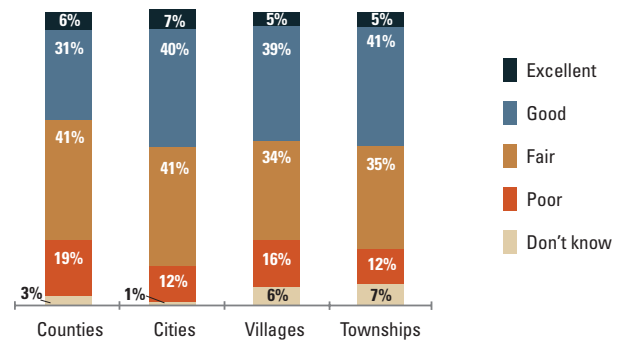
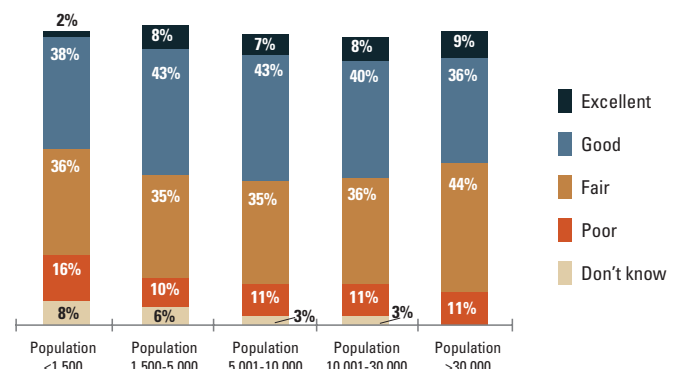


Figure 1c

Local leaders' assessments of their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the State government, by population size



Differences do emerge again when looking by region. For example, as shown in *Figure 1d*, local leaders in Southwest Michigan are the most likely to say their government's relationship with the State is good or excellent (55%) and the least likely to say it is just fair or poor (40%). By comparison, local officials from the Upper Peninsula are the least likely to say the relationship is good or excellent (39%), and are much more likely to say it is only fair or poor (51%).

There are also differences in local officials' views on State-local relations based on their own partisan identification, which may not be surprising given the current control of the State legislature and executive branches by Republican officials. Among local leaders who identify themselves as Republicans, a majority (55%) rate their government's relationship with the State as excellent or good while majorities of self-identified Independents (59%) and Democrats (57%) rate the relations as only fair or poor (see *Figure 1e*).

Finally, as shown in *Figure 1f*, appointed officials such as city and township managers or county administrators are more likely to view their jurisdiction's relationship with the State government as only fair or poor (56%), compared with elected officials such as city mayors, village presidents, township supervisors and clerks, and county board chairs (46%).

Figure 1d

Local leaders' assessments of their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the State government, by region

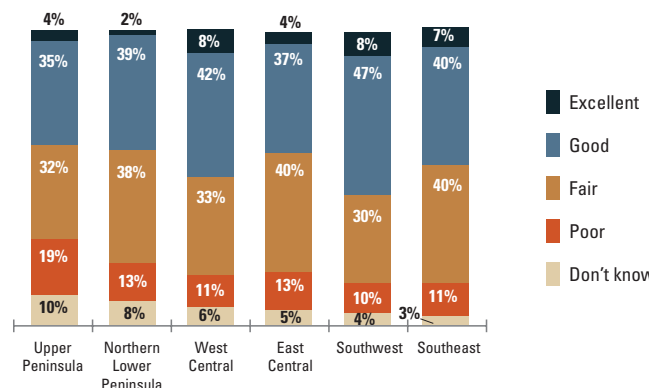


Figure 1e

Local leaders' assessments of their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the State government, by party identification

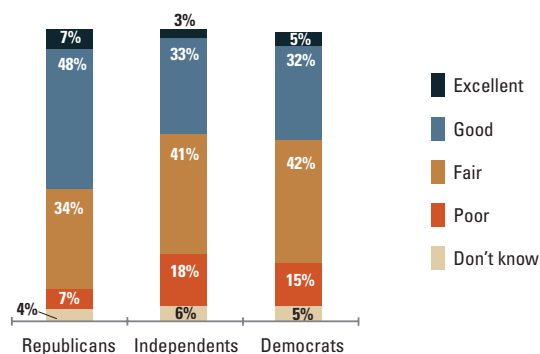
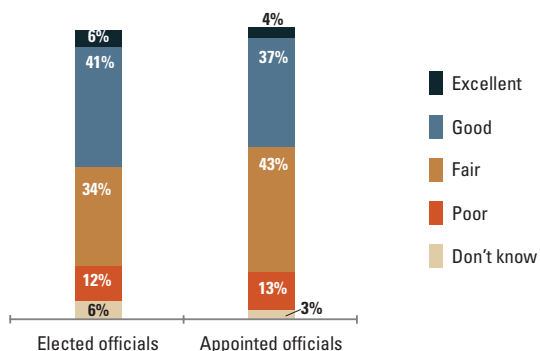


Figure 1f

Local leaders' assessments of their jurisdiction's overall relationship with the State government, by elected or appointed official





Local leaders cite numerous factors of concern regarding State-local relations, including State preemption of local authority

The MPPS asked local leaders a wide range of questions about detailed aspects of State-local relations in Michigan, and found numerous areas of concern.

At the core of the relationship between the State of Michigan and local governments is the basic issue of trust. Unfortunately, as seen in *Figure 2*, only 22% of local government leaders trust Michigan's state government to "do what is right" nearly always or most of the time. Meanwhile, a greater percentage (25%) say they trust State government officials seldom or almost never.

Still, while these levels of trust are very low, they are up slightly from the last time the MPPS asked about trust in 2013, when it found just 19% of local leaders trusted the State government.¹² Interestingly, the greatest increase in trust between 2013 and 2016 was among local Democratic leaders: in 2013 just 7% of self-identified Democratic local officials trusted the State government nearly always or most of the time, but this doubled to 14% as of 2016. This increase is somewhat surprising, given the State's role in the Flint water crisis. Still, despite the marginal overall increase in levels of local trust toward the State between 2013 and 2016 (from 19% to 22%), perhaps the more important finding for understanding State-local relations is that levels of trust are still remarkably low.

On the flip side, the MPPS asked local leaders whether they think State officials trust local governments and here too found a great deal of skepticism. Just 29% of local leaders think State officials trust local governments nearly always or most of the time (see *Figure 3*). And in fact, things may be even worse than local officials think. The Michigan Policy Insiders Panel (MPIP), conducted by Michigan State University's Institute for Public Policy and Social Research (IPPSR) in partnership with CLOSUP, is a new survey program of state-level "political insiders," including legislators and legislative staff, high-level administrative officials, interest group leaders, lobbyists, and others. According to an MPIP survey in Fall 2016, only 18% of respondents from the legislature (mostly staff) and 19% from the executive branch say State leaders trust Michigan's local governments nearly always or most of the time.¹³

Clearly, low levels of mutual trust between State and local government leaders present significant challenges to State-local relations.

Figure 2

Local leaders' levels of trust in Michigan's state government overall

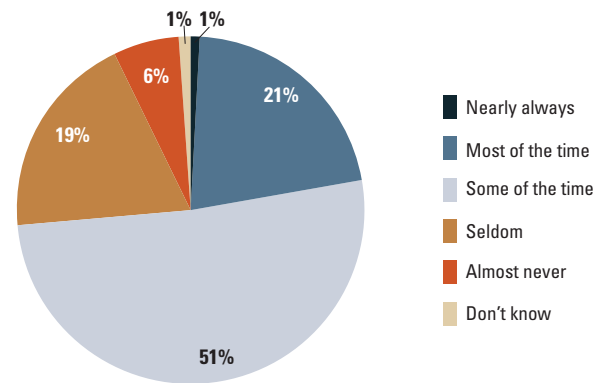
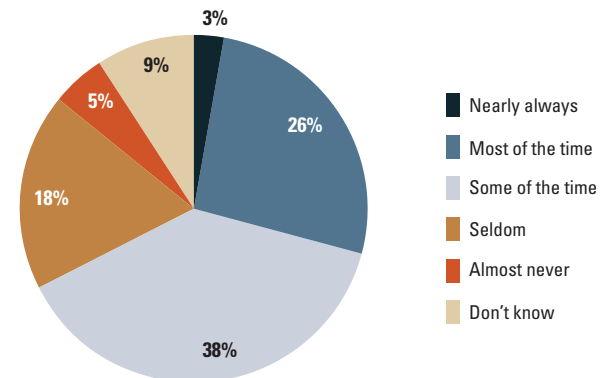


Figure 3

Local leaders' views on whether Michigan's state government officials trust local governments



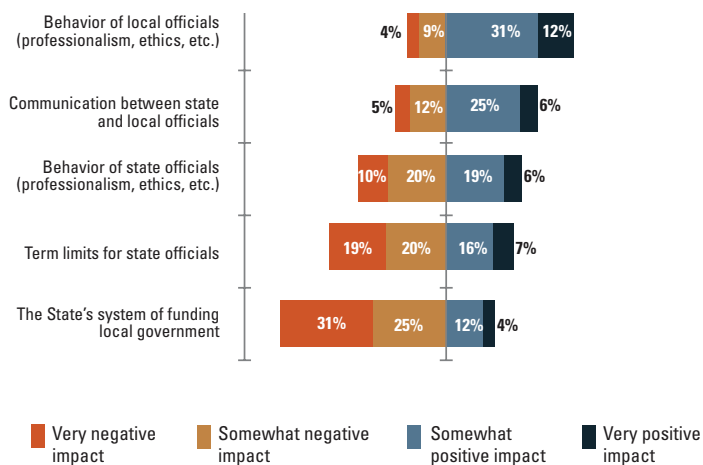
Beyond issues of trust, the MPPS also asked about five specific factors that may have positive or negative impacts on State-local relations. On balance, local leaders believe that the behavior (e.g., professionalism, ethics, etc.) of other local leaders around the State has a positive impact on State-local relations. As seen in *Figure 4*, overall, 43% believe the behavior of local leaders has positive impacts on State-local relations, while 13% believe the behavior has negative impacts. They also believe that the practice and approach to communications between State and local officials has a net positive impact, with 31% seeing positive outcomes and 17% seeing negative outcomes on State-local relationships.

However, local leaders see net negative impacts from three other factors. Most importantly, 56% believe Michigan's system of funding local governments has a negative impact, while just 16% see a positive impact on State-local relations. Previous MPPS reports highlight many of the concerns local leaders have regarding the system of funding, which they believe is broken.¹⁴ In addition, local leaders see net negative impacts from Michigan's term limits for State officials, and from the behavior of State officials, although this latter factor has only marginal net negative impacts in the view of local leaders.

Finally, the MPPS asked local leaders whether they agree or disagree with five additional statements regarding the State government itself, and finds areas of concern with each. Most concerning, 70% of local leaders believe the State government is taking away too much decision-making authority from local governments, reflecting worries about State preemption of local power (see *Figure 5*). In addition, 67% believe that the State holds local government officials to a higher standard than it holds itself. A majority of local officials also believe the State treats some jurisdictions or types of jurisdictions better than others (57%), and that the State government's decision-making is not transparent (50%). Last, while 43% of local leaders believe State officials do value input from local officials, nonetheless a sizeable portion (35%) feel the opposite.

Figure 4

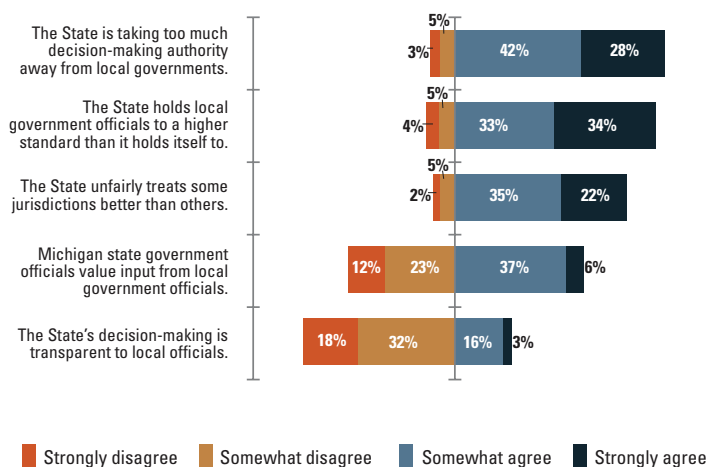
Local leaders' assessments of factors that have positive or negative impacts on State-local relations



Note: responses for "mixed positive and negative impact," "no impact," and "don't know" not shown

Figure 5

Local leaders' agreement or disagreement with statements regarding Michigan's state government



Note: responses for "neither agree nor disagree" and "don't know" not shown



For community comparisons on these various factors, full breakdowns of these items by jurisdiction population size can be found in *Appendix A* and *B*.

Meanwhile, regression analysis provides a few more clues to how these various factors impact State-local relations in the view of local leaders. Whereas large percentages of local leaders believe the State is taking away too much local authority (70%), and believe the State's system of funding local government harms State-local relations (56%), neither of these factors appear to be strongly correlated with how local leaders evaluate relationships between the State and its local governments. Instead, the three factors most closely correlated with views on State-local relations are 1) whether local leaders feel the State values input from local leaders, 2) whether communications between the local jurisdiction and the State are generally positive or negative, and 3) whether local leaders trust the State government.

Of course, regression analysis cannot show causation—for example, it cannot show that trust leads to believing relations are good. In addition, there could be a “chicken and egg” process at play. That is to say, it is possible that if relations with the State are positive, perhaps that drives higher levels of trust among local leaders toward the State, rather than high levels of trust driving a sense that relations are good. Nonetheless, these three factors (levels of trust, views on whether the State values local input, and whether communications are positive or negative) stand out as most closely correlated with views on the overall status of State-local relations, far outpacing any other factors that were measured, including characteristics of the jurisdiction, like size or region, or characteristics of the local official, like their partisan identification.

Local leaders say they are more likely to reach out to State officials than to hear from them

The MPPS also asked a series of follow-up questions regarding communications between State and local officials, and finds local officials report they are more likely to reach out to State officials than State officials are to contact them at the local level. Overall, two-thirds (67%) of local officials report that they or a representative of their jurisdiction contacts the State numerous times each year on issues that affect their local jurisdiction, with some reaching out more than once a month (16%) and more than half (51%) contacting the State at least a few times a year (see *Figure 6a*). By contrast, only 39% of local leaders say that the State government officials reach out to their jurisdiction about salient local issues a few times or more each year. Meanwhile, 30% of officials say their jurisdiction rarely or never reaches out to the State on local issues in a given year, and 58% say they rarely or never hear from State officials regarding State actions affecting their jurisdiction.

Population size is an important factor in the reported frequency of these communications, with larger jurisdictions being significantly more likely than smaller ones to report being in communication with the State. Among jurisdictions with more than 30,000 residents, over half (56%) report contacting State officials at least once a month regarding actions by the State that affect their jurisdiction, compared to just 7% of the state's smallest jurisdictions (see *Figure 6b*). Likewise, while just 5% of the largest jurisdictions say they rarely or never contact State government officials, the same is true for 44% of the smallest local governments. Still, even for the largest jurisdictions, local leaders are much less likely to report hearing from State officials every month than they are to report reaching out to Lansing themselves.

Figure 6a
Percentage of local leaders reporting contact between State and local officials in typical 12-month period

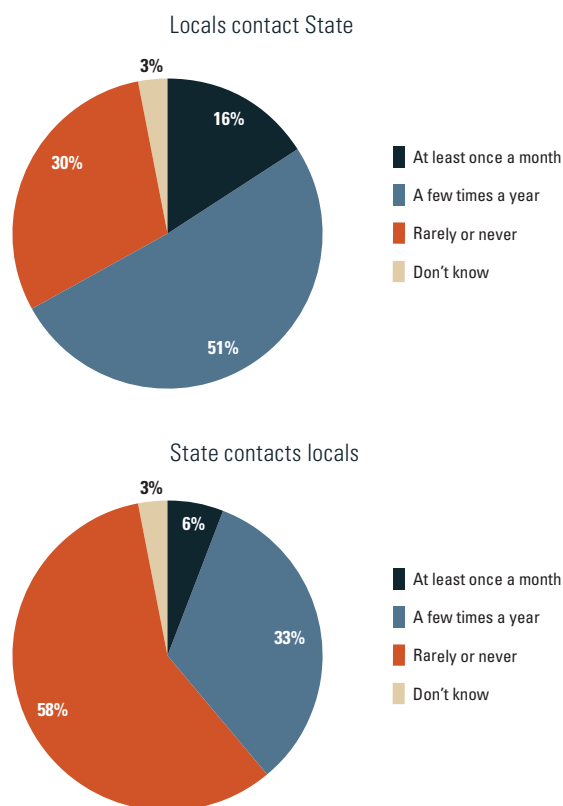
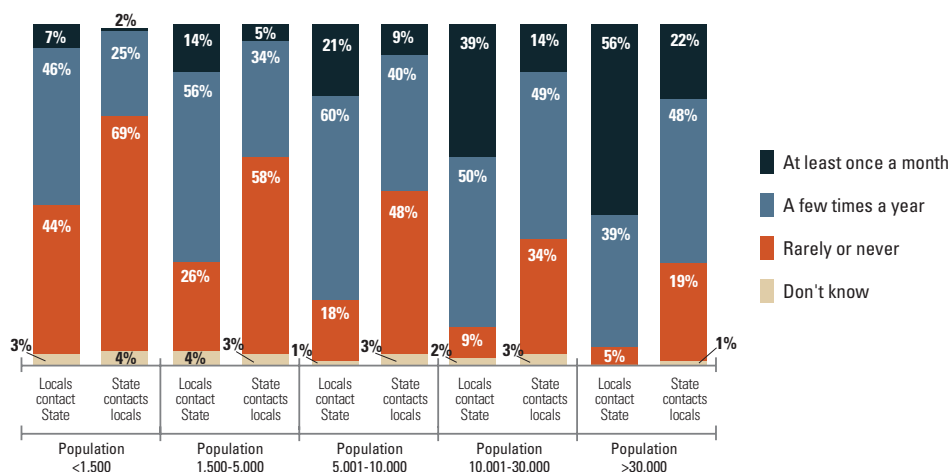


Figure 6b
Percentage of local leaders reporting contact between State and local officials in typical 12-month period, by population size



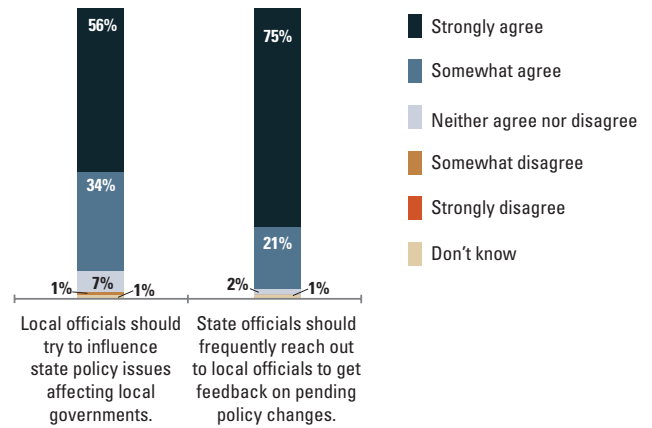


It is worth noting that State officials may find it difficult to reach out to all local jurisdictions regularly, given Michigan's large number of local governments. In addition, the MPPS often finds a wide range of perspectives and priorities among local jurisdictions, which might further complicate the job of State officials in coordinating directly with the many—and sometimes conflicting—voices among local governments across the state. On the other hand, the State might consider whether more local outreach is worthwhile as a means of relationship-building, regardless of whether there is consensus among local officials.

Although there are variations in how often local officials say they contact or hear from State officials, there is no question they think this kind of communication is both legitimate and important. When asked whether local officials should try to influence State actions affecting local governments, 90% agree they should, including 56% who say they strongly agree, with almost none disagreeing (see *Figure 7*). And when it comes to the question of whether State officials should reach out to local leaders to get feedback on pending policy changes, there is near unanimous agreement they should (96%), including 75% who strongly agree. Local leaders from larger jurisdictions are even more supportive of these approaches. Among those officials from jurisdictions with over 30,000 residents, 71% strongly agree that local officials should try to influence State actions affecting local governments, and 92% strongly believe the State should reach out to local governments frequently.

Figure 7

Local leaders' views on State-local communication regarding policies that affect local governments



Local officials also see communication as crucial to repairing State-local relations for those who think relations are not good today. The MPPS asked local leaders two open-ended questions where they could specifically describe what actions the State and, separately, local governments could take to improve relations. The question about actions the State could take elicited over 1,000 descriptive comments from more than 700 local leaders. In addition, 645 officials supplied almost 800 comments on what local governments could do to help improve relations with the State. These kinds of open-end questions allow local officials to provide more detailed information compared to a standard check-box question, and allow them to provide unique responses that survey designers may not have considered. Although these open-end responses do not necessarily speak for the entire MPPS sample, they do represent an extensive cross-section of opinions regarding how State-local relations could be improved.

Among those local leaders who had suggestions for actions the State could take to improve relations with local governments, by far the most common set of remarks (about half of all those offered) focus on aspects of communication. Overall, 150 comments urge the State to listen to local jurisdictions' perspectives and generally work to improve communication, while another 163 specifically recommend the State more actively seek input from local governments before changing laws. Other suggestions for better communication advise that State officials should regularly visit local jurisdictions in person for individual meetings or to attend board/council meetings, and be more forthcoming with information to keep local leaders up to speed on State actions. Meanwhile, about a quarter of the open-end comments regarding proposed State actions focus on specific aspects of revenue, funding, and taxation, generally with the goal of fixing Michigan's system of funding local government, stopping unfunded mandates, and getting more revenue or revenue options to the local level.

Suggestions for what local governments themselves could do to help improve State-local relations similarly run heavily toward actions to improve communication. About three-quarters of local leaders' recommendations for local governments involve actions such as educating State officials on local circumstances and needs, contacting State officials more consistently to open dialogue and engage them, focusing on improving the quality of communications, and attending or setting up meetings with State officials more regularly to build better networks and partnerships. Many local officials also note that they and their peers need to become or stay educated on current policy and State government efforts in order to make the State-local relationship stronger.

The "Voices Across Michigan" section that follows provides a small sample of these comments.



Voices Across Michigan

What local officials say the State could do to improve the relationship between the State and local governments:

- “Listen. It is very frustrating to the point of not communicating when it feels like opinions or responses to issues are falling on deaf ears. Reach out — even with an email periodically with a statement of what is happening that may impact local government. Then let us respond and then communicate that they received our communications. This goes for all portions of State government, including DEQ, Treasurer, etc.”
- “Send representatives to local governments at least 3 times a year. The State needs to realize that one size doesn’t fit all.”
- “Visit us more. Input sessions are for listening to local input. They currently are perceived as where the State officials tell the locals what things will be. Many have given up going to the meetings because they believe what they think will not be considered.”
- “Stop the unfunded mandates. Candidates run on this issue frequently, then introduce and pass legislation that creates this condition. Seek input from locals during the legislative process. It seems to me that by the time we see the wording in legislation and see that it will cause issues for the locals it’s hard to get any changes at that point.”
- “Eliminate term limits so that the people that you are dealing with have more than 4 or 5 years of experience in the issue that you are discussing with them. It is not just the legislators that are green, they bring in new staff with them that are just as green. All of the long term committee staff are gone and we are reeducating new people all the time.”
- “They want to communicate everything through the computer. Some jurisdictions don’t always have good internet service. The State also makes many policies that pertain to larger communities and forget that some of these policies create major problems and hardships on smaller rural townships.”
- “Listen to us!”

What local officials say local governments could do to improve the relationship between the State and local governments:

- “Local governments should reach out and make the effort to contact State employees establishing relations. If future issues require State help then a relationship is already established and communication would be much easier.”
- “Not just identify problems and complain, but also provide well-thought-out solutions or options for the state to consider.”
- “Do more to communicate impacts of state legislation, both good and bad. Give local reps credit where credit is due (i.e. don’t just tell them what is wrong all the time, but commend them on what they are doing right). This leads to more open communication.”
- “I do not know. We reach out to state lawmakers when issues affect our community. But most of the time, we are not listened to because there are other agendas in play.”
- “Have the local Rep and Senator on speed dial.”
- “If adequate resources and flexibility are provided to the local units, I think the State would find those units a hugely positive partner in improving every corner of the state economically, socially, etc. making Michigan stronger and attracting/retaining development, talent, business activity and residents. Locals should be willing to accept the challenge that would come with better State support and see that the resources are put to the best possible use. We need to get the State elected officials back on the same team with local elected and appointed officials.”
- “Insist that our voices are heard by various means: direct contact/relationship-building with legislators and state administrators; educating the public on how state decisions impact local government; encouraging constituents to follow up with their legislators. All of these tasks are made more difficult due to term limits. The poor quality, hyper partisan legislation that we see from the state legislature puts a lot of pressure on local governments, and the average citizen doesn’t really understand the relationship between the state and local government. Residents are understandably frustrated and disheartened. In other words, it’s a steep learning curve that is made more challenging by the fact that residents are angry — at representatives at every level of government.”

Conclusion

Relationships between state and local governments are complex, based on many factors that are constantly changing. Previous MPPS findings have highlighted local leaders' concerns about many factors that could impact State-local relations, such as the State's system of funding local governments, low opinions of the job performance of State policymakers, concerns about unfunded mandates, and more. While these and other factors do loom large in the view of local leaders, the Fall 2016 MPPS finds that three factors—local leaders' levels of trust in the State, whether they think State officials value local leaders' input, and whether they view communications with the State in positive or negative terms—appear to carry particular weight in their assessments of Michigan's State-local relations.

Statewide, just 22% of local leaders trust the State government, and less than half (43%) believe that Michigan's State government officials value input from local officials. Just 31% believe that communications between their jurisdiction and the State is a positive factor in State-local relations. However, more so than with any other factors examined, those who believe State officials value their input, believe that communications are positive factors, and generally trust the State government are significantly more likely to say their local governments have good relationships with the State.

As noted earlier, local officials report being more active in outreach to the State than state officials are to local jurisdictions. Yet while there are certain challenges for the State in communicating with all local governments individually, given the diversity of issues and views on policies among local officials, it may be that more local outreach by state officials would be worthwhile as relationship-building efforts, regardless of whether there is local government consensus.

Indeed, when asked outright what both local leaders and State government officials could do to improve State-local relations, mentions of communication issues far outpace other topics, including even issues of funding and revenue for local governments. These findings suggest that simple efforts at fostering better communication between the State and local government could go a long way toward improving State-local relations, at little cost.



Notes

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Survey Background and Methodology

The MPPS is a biannual survey of each of Michigan's 1,856 units of general purpose local government, conducted once each spring and fall. While the spring surveys consist of multiple batteries of the same "core" fiscal, budgetary and operational policy questions and are designed to build-up a multi-year time-series of data, the fall surveys focus on various other topics.

In the Fall 2016 iteration, surveys were sent by the Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) via the internet and hardcopy to top elected and appointed officials (including county administrators and board chairs; city mayors and managers; village presidents, clerks, and managers; and township supervisors, clerks, and managers) from all 83 counties, 278 cities, 255 villages, and 1,240 townships in the state of Michigan.

The Fall 2016 wave was conducted from October 3 – December 13, 2016. A total of 1,315 jurisdictions in the Fall 2016 wave returned valid surveys (61 counties, 224 cities, 178 villages, and 852 townships), resulting in a 71% response rate by unit. The margin of error for the survey for the survey as a whole is +/- 1.46%. The key relationships discussed in the above report are statistically significant at the $p < .05$ level or below, unless otherwise specified. Missing responses are not included in the tabulations, unless otherwise specified. Some report figures may not add to 100% due to rounding within response categories. Quantitative data are weighted to account for non-response. "Voices Across Michigan" verbatim responses, when included, may have been edited for clarity and brevity. Contact CLOSUP staff for more information.

Detailed tables of the data analyzed in this report broken down three ways—by jurisdiction type (county, city, township, or village); by population size of the respondent's community, and by the region of the respondent's jurisdiction—are available online at the MPPS homepage: <http://closup.umich.edu/mpps.php>.

The survey responses presented here are those of local Michigan officials, while further analysis represents the views of the authors. Neither necessarily reflects the views of the University of Michigan, or of other partners in the MPPS.



Appendix A

Views on factors that may impact the relationship between the State and Michigan's local governments, by population size

	Community Population Size				
	<1,500 Percentage Reporting	1,500-5,000 Percentage Reporting	5,001-10,000 Percentage Reporting	10,001-30,000 Percentage Reporting	>30,000 Percentage Reporting
Behavior of local officials (professionalism, ethics, etc.)					
Very positive impact	13%	13%	10%	10%	10%
Somewhat positive impact	30%	32%	33%	36%	27%
Somewhat negative impact	8%	8%	8%	14%	15%
Very negative impact	5%	3%	4%	3%	4%
Communication between state and local officials					
Very positive impact	5%	6%	7%	8%	9%
Somewhat positive impact	24%	26%	22%	27%	20%
Somewhat negative impact	12%	11%	13%	18%	18%
Very negative impact	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%
Behavior of state officials (professionalism, ethics, etc.)					
Very positive impact	7%	6%	6%	7%	6%
Somewhat positive impact	18%	19%	22%	24%	13%
Somewhat negative impact	18%	19%	15%	28%	33%
Very negative impact	8%	10%	9%	14%	11%
Term limits for state officials					
Very positive impact	10%	7%	3%	7%	1%
Somewhat positive impact	20%	17%	8%	6%	2%
Somewhat negative impact	16%	21%	28%	26%	15%
Very negative impact	10%	16%	27%	39%	57%
The State's system of funding local government					
Very positive impact	4%	5%	3%	3%	2%
Somewhat positive impact	13%	14%	6%	8%	2%
Somewhat negative impact	26%	27%	18%	22%	21%
Very negative impact	24%	25%	43%	52%	64%

Appendix B

Percentage of local officials who agree or disagree with statements regarding the relationship between local jurisdictions and the State government, by population size

	Community Population Size				
	<1,500 Percentage Reporting	1,500-5,000 Percentage Reporting	5,001-10,000 Percentage Reporting	10,001-30,000 Percentage Reporting	>30,000 Percentage Reporting
The State is taking too much decision-making authority away from local governments.					
Strongly agree	24%	26%	39%	36%	47%
Somewhat agree	42%	44%	41%	41%	31%
Somewhat disagree	4%	6%	4%	7%	6%
Strongly disagree	3%	2%	3%	5%	5%
The State holds local government officials to a higher standard than it holds itself to.					
Strongly agree	28%	31%	43%	50%	56%
Somewhat agree	33%	35%	36%	28%	24%
Somewhat disagree	6%	6%	2%	3%	3%
Strongly disagree	4%	3%	4%	6%	3%
The State unfairly treats some jurisdictions better than others.					
Strongly agree	19%	21%	23%	27%	35%
Somewhat agree	36%	34%	34%	38%	37%
Somewhat disagree	5%	4%	3%	4%	10%
Strongly disagree	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%
Michigan state government officials value input from local government officials.					
Strongly agree	3%	8%	4%	6%	6%
Somewhat agree	38%	38%	40%	36%	31%
Somewhat disagree	19%	23%	27%	33%	26%
Strongly disagree	12%	10%	11%	13%	25%
The State's decision-making is transparent to local officials.					
Strongly agree	3%	4%	2%	3%	0%
Somewhat agree	16%	17%	14%	21%	7%
Somewhat disagree	31%	30%	35%	36%	42%
Strongly disagree	13%	16%	24%	27%	37%



Previous MPPS reports

Local leaders more likely to support than oppose Michigan's Emergency Manager law, but strongly favor reforms (February 2017)

Local government leaders' views on drinking water and water supply infrastructure in Michigan communities (November 2016)

Michigan local leaders say property tax appeals are common, disagree with 'dark stores' assessing (October 2016)

Local officials say Michigan's system of funding local government is broken, and seek State action to fix it (September 2016)

Michigan local governments report first declines in fiscal health trend since 2010 (August 2016)

Michigan local leaders' doubts continue regarding the state's direction (July 2016)

Hospital access primary emergency medical concern among many Michigan local officials (July 2016)

Firefighting services in Michigan: challenges and approaches among local governments (June 2016)

Most local officials are satisfied with law enforcement services, but almost half from largest jurisdictions say their funding is insufficient (April 2016)

Local leaders say police-community relations are good throughout Michigan, but those in large cities are concerned about potential civil unrest over police use-of-force (February 2016)

Report: Responding to budget surplus vs. deficit: the preferences of Michigan's local leaders and citizens (December 2015)

Michigan's local leaders concerned about retiree health care costs and their governments' ability to meet future obligations (October 2015)

Fiscal health rated relatively good for most jurisdictions, but improvement slows and decline continues for many (September 2015)

Confidence in Michigan's direction declines among state's local leaders (August 2015)

Michigan local government leaders' views on private roads (July 2015)

Few Michigan jurisdictions have adopted Complete Streets policies, though many see potential benefits (June 2015)

Michigan local leaders have positive views on relationships with county road agencies, despite some concerns (May 2015)

Michigan local government leaders say transit services are important, but lack of funding discourages their development (April 2015)

Michigan local leaders see need for state and local ethics reform (March 2015)

Local leaders say Michigan road funding needs major increase, but lack consensus on options that would raise the most revenue (February 2015)

Michigan local government leaders' views on employee pay and benefits (January 2015)

Despite increasingly formal financial management, relatively few Michigan local governments have adopted recommended policies (December 2014)

Most Michigan local officials are satisfied with their privatized services, but few seek to expand further (November 2014)

Michigan local governments finally pass fiscal health tipping point overall, but one in four still report decline (October 2014)

Beyond the coast, a tenuous relationship between Michigan local governments and the Great Lakes (September 2014)

Confidence in Michigan's direction holds steady among state's local leaders (August 2014)

Wind power as a community issue in Michigan (July 2014)

Fracking as a community issue in Michigan (June 2014)

The impact of tax-exempt properties on Michigan local governments (March 2014)

Michigan's local leaders generally support Detroit bankruptcy filing despite some concerns (February 2014)

Michigan local governments increasingly pursue placemaking for economic development (January 2014)

Views on right-to-work legislation among Michigan's local government leaders (December 2013)

Michigan local governments continue seeking, and receiving, union concessions (October 2013)

Michigan local government fiscal health continues gradual improvement, but smallest jurisdictions lagging (September 2013)

Local leaders evaluate state policymaker performance and whether Michigan is on the right track (August 2013)

Trust in government among Michigan's local leaders and citizens (July 2013)

Citizen engagement in the view of Michigan's local government leaders (May 2013)

Beyond trust in government: government trust in citizens? (March 2013)

Local leaders support reforming Michigan's system of funding local government (January 2013)

Local leaders support eliminating Michigan's Personal Property Tax if funds are replaced, but distrust state follow-through (November 2012)

Michigan's local leaders satisfied with union negotiations (October 2012)

Michigan's local leaders are divided over the state's emergency manager law (September 2012)

Fiscal stress continues for hundreds of Michigan jurisdictions, but conditions trend in positive direction overall (September 2012)

Michigan's local leaders more positive about Governor Snyder's performance, more optimistic about the state's direction (July 2012)

Data-driven decision-making in Michigan local government (June 2012)

State funding incentives increase local collaboration, but also raise concerns (March 2012)

Local officials react to state policy innovation tying revenue sharing to dashboards and incentive funding (January 2012)

MPPS finds fiscal health continues to decline across the state, though some negative trends eased in 2011 (October 2011)

Public sector unions in Michigan: their presence and impact according to local government leaders (August 2011)

Despite increased approval of state government performance, Michigan's local leaders are concerned about the state's direction (August 2011)

Local government and environmental leadership: views of Michigan's local leaders (July 2011)

Local leaders are mostly positive about intergovernmental cooperation and look to expand efforts (March 2011)

Local government leaders say most employees are not overpaid, though some benefits may be too generous (February 2011)

Local government leaders say economic gardening can help grow their economies (November 2010)

Local governments struggle to cope with fiscal, service, and staffing pressures (August 2010)

Michigan local governments actively promote U.S. Census participation (August 2010)

Fiscal stimulus package mostly ineffective for local economies (May 2010)

Fall 2009 key findings report: educational, economic, and workforce development issues at the local level (April 2010)

Local government officials give low marks to the performance of state officials and report low trust in Lansing (March 2010)

Local government fiscal and economic development issues (October 2009)

All MPPS reports are available online at: <http://closup.umich.edu/mpps.php>

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The **Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP)**, housed at the University of Michigan's Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, conducts and supports applied policy research designed to inform state, local, and urban policy issues. Through integrated research, teaching, and outreach involving academic researchers, students, policymakers and practitioners, CLOSUP seeks to foster understanding of today's state and local policy problems, and to find effective solutions to those problems.

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