

INTRODUCTION

The Commission on State-Local Relations was created to foster a strong relationship between the State and its counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts and other units of government. Because state-local relations involve continuous interaction during periods of economic and social change, policies and procedures must adjust to maintain their effectiveness. Federal and State programs to assist local governments are initiated, modified or ended in response to changes. To aid local governments in tracking and taking advantage of these programs, the Commission produces a Catalog of State and Federal Programs Aiding New York's Local Governments. The catalog may be accessed on the assembly web site at the following location: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/comm/>.

The catalog profiles programs of intergovernmental aid generated from the federal government to the State government, from the federal government to local jurisdictions within the State (with or without State participation), and from the State to local jurisdictions. Compiled from information provided by both State and Federal agency sources, the catalog is among the most comprehensive publications of local aid programs available for New York. The catalog complements other publications of aid programs that provide more detailed information.

A publication that the Commission has found useful in preparing its catalog is the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA). It is a compilation of Federal programs which provide assistance to the public. "The primary purpose of the catalog is to assist users in identifying programs which meet specific objectives of the potential applicant, and to obtain general information on Federal assistance programs. In addition, the intent of the catalog is to improve coordination and communication between the Federal government and its State and local governments."¹ The catalog contains programs available to, among others, State and local governments, profit and nonprofit organizations, specialized groups and individuals. The Commission's catalog used the CFDA as a model in compiling the information contained for each program.

The Commission's catalog is updated on a two-year cycle, and this revision reflects the status of programs as of March 2003. This edition of the catalog provides information on financial assistance as well as technical assistance. Several agencies do not provide financial assistance, but nonetheless provide a very useful service to local governments by providing much needed technical assistance.

Although the Office of the State Comptroller is officially designated as the Department of Audit and Control in State statute, this edition of the Catalog refers to it by its more commonly known name. This is also true of Empire State Development which is designated as the Department of Economic Development in State statute.

¹ Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance, US General Services Administration, Washington, DC, 1994, pg. 6-94.

This publication also provides the following indexing: (1) agency/program, (2) program, (3) object code, and (4) key word.

Catalog Terms

The individual program profiles, the main emphasis of this publication, consist of information about program administration, the award process and method of apportionment, and annual appropriations and disbursements. Within these program profiles, the following terms are used.

Objective - The main purpose or objective of the aid program.

Administering Agency - The New York State and/or the United States government agency which has primary responsibility for administering the program.

Specific Program URL - Web site for particular program.

Object Code - All object codes used by reporting agencies to process payments of grants to local governments are listed for each program. These are the codes used by the State Comptroller's Office to process aid payment information in the State's central accounting system. Note that some programs use multiple object codes, and some object codes are used by more than one program.

Federal CFDA Number - The identification number assigned to Federal programs in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance.

Year Established - The first calendar year in which the program was in operation.

Legal Authority - The State and Federal laws specific to the program, and any regulations governing program operation as reported by State agencies.

Program and/or Fiscal Contacts - Agency staff to be contacted for further information concerning program particulars, including application, rules and funding. When available, E-Mail addresses were added.

Eligibility - Lists governmental (State, counties, cities, towns, villages, school districts) or other recipients (non-profits, private contractors, individuals) which qualify for aid. Stipulations that pertain to applicants for the funding activity are also included.

Type of Program and Use Restrictions - Indicates whether the type of activity supported by the program, at its inception, is a mandated local government activity, or whether participation is optional, with or without subsequent mandatory requirements. Further stipulates any limitations which may be imposed on the recipient as to how program funds may be spent.

Action Required to Receive Aid - Describes the action(s) required by the local government or non-profit to receive aid.

Flow of Funds - Identifies money flow patterns used in the program: (1) Federal to State; (2) Federal to State to Local (Pass-through); (3) Federal to Local; (4) State to Local; or (5) Federal and State to Local.

Type of Aid - Indicates whether funding is for a project grant of limited duration or if it is for an ongoing program.

Aid Formula - If money is allocated among recipients based on arithmetic calculations, describes formula prescribed by law or administrative regulations and formula factors. Note that matching requirements are not treated as "formulas."

Matching Requirement - Where applicable, lists the percentage of program costs which must be provided by the recipient in order to receive aid and the percentage provided by the State and/or Federal governments. Any special requirements or qualifications to matching requirements are also given.

Maintenance of Effort - Indicates whether recipients must show evidence that program funds are being used to expand pre-existing local spending or to provide higher levels of service.

Amounts Appropriated and Disbursed - (1) Program appropriations are listed for State Fiscal Years 2000-01, 2001-02 and 2002-03. (2) Program disbursements are listed for State Fiscal Years 2000-01 and 2001-02 as reported by the administering agencies. (3) Figures should represent amounts paid to recipients, and should not include State costs for operation or administration. (4) Totals reflect "governmental" recipients and "all other" recipients. (5) Amounts appropriated and paid from the State's General Fund are shown separately from amounts appropriated and paid from Federal Funds and other State Special Revenue Funds.

Comments - Any significant additional information provided by the agency.

Limitations

Careful attention has been paid to ensure accuracy. However, inconsistent terminology, differences in agency accounting systems, the potential for miscoding of vouchers, restrictions of the current central accounting system code structure, and the Commission's focus on local government entities all combine to limit the catalog's applications. These limitations are most apparent in the number of programs included and the financial data presented.

For purposes of this catalog, activities are defined as "programs" by each separate administering agency. Since there are no universally accepted rules for determining when an activity constitutes a separate program, identifying the number of aid programs is necessarily somewhat arbitrary. Often, for instance, one statute may authorize a number of distinct but very closely related programs, while other statutes combine programs which differ significantly in funding, operation, or administration. To gain some degree of consistency, the catalog relies on the identification of aid programs generated from a comprehensive, and uniformly administered survey of New York State agency officials. One result of using this process to define "aid programs" is identification of a larger set of programs, often with different titles than may be found in other published sources.

The catalog is primarily concerned with current, statutorily based programs of assistance that channel funds and technical assistance to recipients throughout New York State. As a consequence, programs which are the result of an annual appropriation constituting legislative grants-in-aid are not included.

All of the grant disbursements, whether to a governmental or non-governmental recipient, are made by the State Comptroller's Office, pursuant to a voucher, and charged to a specific "object" of expenditure in the central accounting system. Recognizing the importance of developing program-related payment data for effective legislative oversight and analysis, the catalog is keyed to this grant object coding system. Although every effort has been made to properly associate the flow of funds between the various levels of government to the appropriate program, the user must exercise extreme caution when trying to manipulate the disbursement figures or compare them with appropriation or expenditure data from other sources. While the catalog attempts to reference all "grants to local government" which include monies paid to both governmental and nongovernmental recipients, some local aid amounts are not classified as grants and are paid as part of a State agency's operations.

For these reasons, before any use -- and especially if comparative analysis among programs is contemplated -- the user is cautioned to contact the agency.