

Presentation Guide – How to Use the Video & Localize the Message

Community Round-Table on PEG Channels

Invite local leaders and community residents to engage in a round-table discussion on the impact of revenue sharing in your community - tape the discussion and cable cast it on your local access channel immediately following the video! Use the enclosed sample advisory to invite your local media.

Contact the Media

The media is always an influential audience and are more likely to listen to a message that is localized. This packet includes sample documents for the following public relations/media tactics:

- Distribute a press release regarding the video. See the enclosed sample press-release
- Distribute a media pitch letter to city reporters/editors to get stories and coordinate interviews on radio and television shows across the state. See enclosed sample pitch letter
- Schedule editorial board meetings/press conferences. See enclosed how-to documents

Create a Buzz

People are more likely to be influenced by word-of-mouth recommendations from peers than any other source so try the following tips to create a buzz in your community:

- Present the video at local meetings in your region or other engagement where you know there will be an influential audience watching
- Reference it in your conversations as you would an interesting book or report
- Present it to your staff & council

Go Ahead, Go High-Tech

The video is also available online at www.mml.org so feel free to hyperlink it with your community's website or contact MML at 517.908.0302 and we assist you in streaming it from your communities' website.

Target Audiences

Spreading the Message

Revenue sharing impacts the quality of life for ALL Michigan citizens so the more exposure this video gets the better! Please feel free to make copies and share it with the local leaders, non-profits and community organizations throughout your constituency. The following is a list of suggested groups that are sure to have an interest in educating their members and the public on the importance of revenue sharing as it relates to local services and quality of life.

Captive Audiences

- Community Recreation Centers
- Council Meetings
- Editorial Boards
- EMS Teams
- Fire Stations
- Media
- Parks and Recreation Centers
- PEG Access Channels
- Police Stations
- Public Libraries
- Rotary Clubs
- Senior Centers
- Visitor's bureau

Talking Points: What is Revenue Sharing?

- Local governments use state funding, called revenue sharing, to pay for services that make our communities the types of places where people want to live and businesses want to locate.
- Revenue sharing was promised to local communities in the Michigan Constitution to help pay for core government services such as police protection, fire services, roads, water, sewer and garbage collection services.
- It started in the 1920s when the State of Michigan promised communities it would streamline tax collection by eliminating local taxes and replacing them with state taxes. The State collects and records these taxes and is suppose to reimburse local jurisdictions to off set the general budgets of local communities.
- In every budget since 2000, the State has not fully returned revenue sharing as required by statute. Six consecutive years of cuts left local communities \$2 billion short on revenue sharing.
- The Michigan Legislature needs to recognize the connection between the essential services provided by local communities as it relates to quality of life and the economic vitality of our state.
- Local communities are the foundation of successful economic development in Michigan. Safe streets and functioning infrastructure are critical to attracting and maintaining businesses.
- Communities have reduced their services, eliminated public safety positions and consolidated services to deal with lost revenue.
- According to the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, there are 1,600 fewer police officers on the streets of Michigan since 2001.
- Michigan's Fire Marshall Office reports 2,400 fewer fire fighters since 2001.
- Senior, recreation and public library programs have been drastically cut or eliminated
- Local governments cannot continue to provide essential services if funding is continually redistributed to other budget priorities.

Sample – Press Release

For Immediate Release
[Date]

Contact: [Name]
[Number]

A Community Issue: State Funding Cuts Impacting the Quality of Life for [City/Village] Residents

[City/Village], Mich. – The [City/Village] is creating public awareness of how cuts to state funding are negatively impacting their ability to provide essential local services using an educational video entitled “Revenue Sharing: Impacting Your Quality of Life.”

Local communities, including [City/Village], are responsible for providing residents “quality of life services” such as police protection, fire services, roads, water, sewer and garbage collection.

Lack of state funding, called revenue sharing, is forcing communities to cut-back or eliminate these vital local services. Public safety is in jeopardy and street repair and sewer projects are being postponed; senior citizen, recreation and library programs curtailed or eliminated.

In every budget since 2000, the State has cut revenue sharing to local communities statewide and the impact on public safety and other essential services is devastating.

[QUOTE: For example, Mayor John Smith said, “In [City/Village], we’ve lost # firefighters and # police officers because we haven’t been able to fund those programs effectively relying on our share of the revenue sharing dollars that were promised to us. Public safety is in jeopardy.”]

According to the Michigan Commission on Law Enforcement Standards, there are nearly 1,600 fewer police officers on the streets of Michigan since Sept. 11, 2001 and the state’s Fire Marshall Office reports 400 fewer fire fighters since 2003.

“Revenue Sharing: Impacting Your Quality of Life” was produced by the Michigan Municipal League using local footage, charts and interviews. It is being distributed to community organizations and nonprofit groups statewide and is available online at www.mml.org.

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Sample – Pitch Letter

Dear [Editor],

[City/Village] provides its residents services that directly impact “quality of life” such as public safety, street and sidewalk maintenance, trash removal, sewer repair, downtown beautification and many more services that make our community a vibrant, attractive place to live.

Residents love to [read/hear] about their community [in your publication/on your radio program ect.] and would be very interested to learn state lawmakers are balancing their budget on the backs of these essential local services.

2006 marked the sixth consecutive year of massive funding cuts to local communities. This funding, known as revenue sharing, is what local communities use to pay for police officers, fire fighters, road repairs ect.

Michigan is down 1,600 police officers since September 11, 2001 and senior programs, parks, recreation and other essential local government programs have already been curtailed or eliminated.

This story fits perfectly with the audience demographics and tone set forth by your [form of media]. It targets Michigan residents of all ages concerned with their overall quality of life. The people who [subscribe/listen ect.] to [insert name of publication/program ect.] are not only concerned with their community, but are also worried about the economic vitality of Michigan and the risk associated with poor quality of life.

We are creating public awareness of how cuts to state funding are negatively impacting our ability to provide essential local services to [City/Village] residents using an educational video entitled “Revenue Sharing: Impacting Your Quality of Life” and spreading the message through as many channels as possible.

We are available to discuss this video and our public awareness message with you or any of your staff.

Enclosed is a list of how revenue sharing cuts have impacted [City/Village] so far. Also, the video is available to view online at www.mml.org. If you have any questions or would like to schedule an interview with us, please contact me at [number] or email me at [email].

Sample – Media Advisory

Media Advisory
[Date]

Community Round-Table to Generate Public Awareness of Revenue Sharing

- Who:** Local leaders and community residents
- What:** Community round-table discussion
- When:** [DATE AND TIME]
- Where:** [LOCATION]
- Why:** To generate public awareness of how revenue sharing cuts negatively impact [City/Village] ability to provide the services contributing to quality of life. The discussion will be recorded and played on [City/Village] local access channel.
- Contact:** [Name], [Number]

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How-To Organize and Conduct a Press Event

STEP 1:

Set a date and make the appropriate arrangements

STEP 2:

Compile the names of who you want to attend. This should include the local government reporters and editorial writers from your local papers along with any local experts.

STEP 3:

Send a formal invitation to all the primary media contacts on your list. **TIP:** Include all the pertinent information (who, what, when, where, why) and be sure to ask for an RSVP.

STEP 4:

Fax/email a press release, pitch letter and another invitation to your primary press contacts (this could give the beat reporter enough information to do a story, even if they do not attend). **TIP:** Include city/village brochures, information sheets and a press kit with your press release.

STEP 5:

Organize a staff telephone blitz the day after your fax/email hits. Call your primary press contacts and ask if they plan to attend and/or write a story or if you can provide any additional information.

STEP 6:

Double-check your arrangements and agenda at least two days before the event. **TIP:** Appoint a photographer to the event to make certain you get the shots you want to see in the local paper.

STEP 7:

As guests arrive; make sure they have the proper name badges and offer them a packet with all the information they may need.

STEP 8:

Follow-up after the event by sending thank-you notes to everyone. **TIP:** After the event, offer the photos to the people who attended or include a couple of great shots with each thank-you note.

STEP 9:

Scan each media outlet for stories about your event.

How To: Schedule and Conduct an Editorial Board Meeting

STEP 1:

Call your local newspaper and ask to speak to someone regarding scheduling a meeting with the editorial board.

STEP 2:

Explain to the scheduler your purpose and rationale for requesting an editorial board meeting. **TIPS:**

- Justify the meeting by telling them either you have noticed the paper writing articles on revenue sharing (or related topic) or that the paper has not been covering revenue sharing as it impacts the community
- The issue of state funding is important because revenue sharing to cities and villages has been cut in every state budget since 2001, costs have gone up by [# percent] yet funding has been cut by [\$] in [City/Village].
- Make them believe their newspaper is the best venue for discussing this important issue and that you would like to discuss it further at an editorial board meeting.

STEP 3:

Presenting to the editorial board:

- Bring other local officials with different backgrounds and expertise to demonstrate the wide support for increased revenue sharing as well as to be better prepared to answer questions on a variety of issues. Also, bring handouts and background materials.
- Use the included talking points to organize your thoughts, making sure to make connections between state aid for your city or village and its impact on your community.

STEP 4:

At the end of your presentation, ask the editorial board if they have any questions or concerns. **TIP:** Be prepared to share relevant statistics or a few stories about the people locally who are being directly impacted by cuts.

STEP 5:

Write a short follow-up note or email thanking them for hosting your visit. If an editorial does run, encourage residents, staff and local officials in your area to write letters to the editor in support of the editorial.