



Local Government Membership Dues: Good News

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Let's have some good budget news for a change. I am thrilled to report that all 100 counties have paid their local government membership dues for the current fiscal year. We closed the books on the counties yesterday after we received a check from Haywood County. Before the fiscal year started I had hoped that all of the counties would pay their dues, but it seemed unlikely in light of the economic challenges most of them were facing. Many counties were forced to lay off employees and also impose other kinds of money-saving restrictions. But they still paid their dues to the School, which is remarkable.

We also have collected nearly all of the dues owed by municipalities. A number of cities and towns have not paid their dues, but most of them are small and many will pay before the end of the fiscal year. The School has collected 99% of the \$1.49 million that we billed to cities and counties for this fiscal year.

I have been making the rounds to thank the managers of the larger jurisdictions, and they consistently say that they appreciate the value of the School's work. Frequently they say that the decision to pay our dues "was a no brainer." Some managers have told me that they questioned the payment of dues to some other organizations, including regional councils of government, but it never occurred to them not to pay our dues.

The reason for this phenomenal loyalty is the high-quality and responsive work that you and your predecessors have done for local officials over many years. Cities and counties see us as their partners in improving local government in North Carolina. The money from the membership dues is great, and it is especially critical this fiscal year. The relationship that we have created with local governments through your hard work and commitment to our mission is even more important. It is something to be cherished and preserved, and it is based on the combined efforts of everyone in the organization. Well done.



Our Relationship With Local Governments? Priceless