



The Civic Federation

Research * Information * Action * Est. 1894

The Civic Federation Press Kit

How to describe the Civic Federation

The Civic Federation is an independent, non-partisan government research organization founded in 1894. The Federation's membership includes business and professional leaders from a wide range of Chicago area corporations, professional service firms and institutions.

Mission

The Civic Federation's mission is to provide objective research, analysis and recommendations that:

- Champion efficient delivery of high quality government services;
- Promote sustainable tax policies and responsible long-term financial planning;
- Improve government transparency and accountability; and
- Educate and serve as a resource for policymakers, opinion leaders and the broader public.

History

The Civic Federation was founded in 1894 by several of Chicago's most prominent citizens, including Jane Addams, Bertha Honore Palmer and Lyman J. Gage. They coalesced around the need to address deep concerns about the city's economic, political and moral climate at the end of the 19th century. The resulting organization evolved during the 20th century to become a leading advocate for governmental fiscal responsibility and an effective champion of rational tax policy. The work of the Federation continues to evolve in the 21st century as a greater emphasis is placed on working with government officials to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and accountability of Chicago-area governments.

Areas of Work

The Civic Federation publishes reports and commentary about government tax policies, government services and public expenditures in the Northeast Illinois area. The Civic Federation also works with partner organizations to produce research reports. To see a full listing of the governments and topics we examine, please visit the "Issues" area of our website. All Civic Federation publications are available to the public free of charge and catalogued in the "Library" area of our website.

Institute for Illinois' Fiscal Sustainability

The Civic Federation's Institute for Illinois' Fiscal Sustainability began work in 2008, supported by a generous grant from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

In a state that is notorious for pushing financial crises onto future generations, the Institute works to focus attention on the long-term consequences of current fiscal policies. The Institute's mission is to improve the State of Illinois' decision making process by providing timely fiscal policy analysis and recommendations to State officials, the media and the public through education and digital outreach.

The IIFS provides non-partisan, objective, independent, in-depth and continuing analysis of two crucial areas of State of Illinois spending with regard to finance and budget issues: 1) Medicaid and public employee and retiree healthcare and 2) capital spending and debt.

In addition to an annual cycle of budget reports, the Institute informs Illinois' murky and complex budget process with topical blog posts, evidence-based position statements and regular meetings with State officials. The Institute's analysis also elevates the Civic Federation's work with local governments in the Chicago area by providing a broader perspective on the financial challenges facing the City of Chicago, Cook County, Chicago Public Schools and other municipalities that rely on the State of Illinois.

Recent Accomplishments

1. **Illinois Governor Pat Quinn cited the Civic Federation's FY2013 State Budget Roadmap and its projection of an alarming increase in the State's backlog of unpaid bills in his February 2012 budget address to the Illinois General Assembly.** This level of attention ensured that Illinois' leaders could no longer ignore the looming fiscal crisis and the need for immediate action to improve the State's finances. In the final days of the 2012 legislative session, the General Assembly passed a groundbreaking package of bills designed to close a \$2.7 billion gap in the State's Medicaid program and prevent the collapse of vital healthcare services for Illinois' most vulnerable populations.
2. **Fiscal progress in the City of Chicago and Cook County continues to follow the recommendations made by the Civic Federation in a series of local government roadmap reports in 2010 and 2011.** In the City of Chicago, this progress included a review of the City's procurement process, reduction of the City workforce and implementation of managed competition. Cook County has similarly embraced many of the Federation's recommendations by adopting a budget with significant reductions, reforming its purchasing process and implementing plans to fully repeal the 2008 sales tax increase.
3. **With the introduction of STAR Performance Management Reports in 2011, Cook County adopted a long-time Civic Federation recommendation to integrate performance measurement into the County's budgeting process.** In the Cook County Modernization Report, the Civic Federation recommended full implementation of performance-based budgeting to provide policy-makers with objective information and enhance public accountability. Since the STAR review sessions were introduced, important policies and procedures have been implemented to improve the County's fiscal responsibility.
4. **Illinois Governor Pat Quinn signed into law two bills that represent significant first steps toward pension reform in Illinois.** Senate Bill 1946 reduces pension benefits for state and local public employees not yet hired and Senate Bill 3538 does the same for police and fire employees across the state. The Civic Federation has long recommended similar reforms to the state pension system.
5. **The Medicaid reform legislation the State of Illinois enacted in January 2011 includes many initiatives that were recommended by the Civic Federation** in its Medicaid Issue Brief and in the Medicaid sections of reports over the past three years. Those recommendations include instituting a

managed care program for disabled and elderly Medicaid recipients and global budgeting for the Medicaid program, which will ensure that the many departments running the Illinois Medicaid program work together toward program goals rather than protecting the line items in their own budgets.

6. **The Civic Federation was one of the strongest and most consistent voices calling for the repeal of the Seniors Ride Free subsidized transit program for all but the lowest income seniors.** The program, which offered free rides to all senior citizens 65 and over, proved to be a major revenue drain for financially stressed mass transit operators across the state. After Governor Pat Quinn signed Public Act 096-1527 into law, transit operators may expect to save \$37 to \$90 million a year with the termination of the program.
7. **The Illinois General Assembly heard the Civic Federation's call for the State of Illinois to implement an accountability and performance reporting system.** The Budgeting for Outcomes initiative that was enacted as part of the fiscal year 2011 budget will now continue as an annual requirement with the signing of House Bill 5424 into law in February 2011. The purpose of the bill is to force the state to reduce spending to match its reasonably expected revenues, just as the Civic Federation's state research institute has recommended in its reports on the state budget.
8. **A tax increment financing (TIF) transparency bill (Public Act 096-1358) passed by the Illinois legislature and signed into law by Governor Quinn in July 2010 includes a number of long-standing Civic Federation recommendations** detailed in the Federation's 2007 TIF report. The new law requires counties and municipalities to generate 10-year status reports, include TIF revenues and expenditures in their annual budgets, and requires municipalities to submit TIF reports in electronic format to the State Comptroller.
9. **In June 2010 the Cook County Board of Commissioners voted 13-3 to make the Cook County Health and Hospitals System (CCHHS) independent board permanent, a move the Civic Federation has long championed.** The Federation first recommended the creation of an independent Board to oversee the Cook County health system in a 2001 research report. Since its founding in 2008, the independent CCHHS board has installed new management across the executive ranks of the System, implemented a strategic planning process, and introduced operational efficiencies. The Civic Federation believes more work remains to be done to introduce more efficiencies to the CCHHS that cannot be accomplished without the supervision provided by an independent Board.
10. The Civic Federation's advocacy was key to the **adoption of a comprehensive solution to the Chicago Transit Authority fiscal crisis in 2008.** Through testimony before the House Mass Transit Committee, letters to the editors of Chicago area newspapers, and meetings with legislative leaders, The Civic Federation supported Illinois State Representative Julie Hamos' all-inclusive mass transit legislation that not only increased funding to the CTA, but also included pension and retiree health care reforms and increased Regional Transit Authority oversight. The groundbreaking pension reforms the CTA negotiated with its unions included many long-time Civic Federation recommendations.
11. The Civic Federation led a three-year campaign to abolish **the Cook County Suburban Tuberculosis Sanitarium District**, a historically inefficient government with questionable financial management. The effort included publication of a research report in 2003, a public education campaign, and the 2006 passage of legislation sponsored by State Senator Don Harmon and State Representative Elaine Nekritz. The effort was recognized with the Governmental Research Association's 2007 Award for Outstanding Policy Achievement.

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