

A Closer Look at Some Small Townships in Ohio...

Township	County	Total Disbursements * (Year Ending December 31, 2000)	Population** (2000 Census)
York Township	Van Wert	\$188,102	650
Homer Township	Morgan	\$180,646	976
Mifflin Township	Wyandot	\$156,534	705
Bloomfield Township	Logan	\$64,547	419
Millwood Township	Guernsey	\$99,762	601
Decatur Township	Lawrence	\$96,093	839

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The information provided in this brochure comes from the following sources:

Township Trustee Sourcebook, Center for Public Management and Regional Affairs, Miami University

Ohio Township Association

Townships: History and Functions, Ohio Township Association

The Ohio Almanac

*Ohio Auditor of State, 2000 Financial Audits

**The Extension Data Center located on The Ohio State University Campus

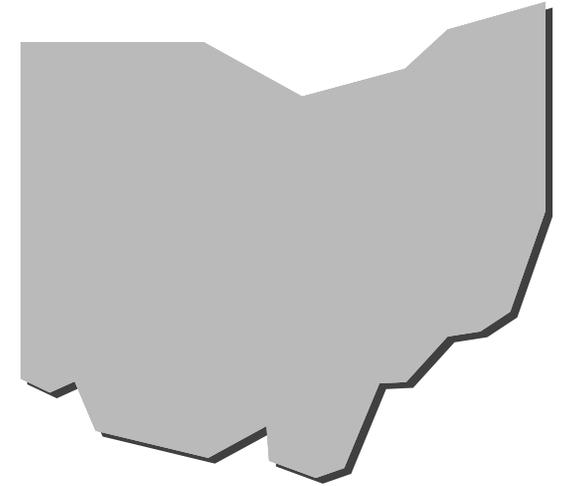
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Understanding Our First Form of Local Government

Township Government In Ohio



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What Is Township Government?

In Ohio, townships are unincorporated civil jurisdictions. Essentially, townships are administrative subdivisions of county government that function as a “statutory local government” exercising only those powers specifically delegated to them by the Ohio General Assembly.

Unlike municipal corporations, i.e. cities and villages, Ohio townships do not enjoy the broad grant of local self-government regarding matters of local concern including the form and structure of local government.

Ohio Townships: *Then & Now*

Townships were the “first form of local government” in Ohio and were laid according to a basic policy for the survey and sale of public lands that predates the U.S. Constitution. In 1785, under the Articles of Confederation, Congress enacted the Land Ordinance of 1785 that identified the Seven Ranges (land parcels west of the Pennsylvania border) and specified that these “ranges” or parcels be subdivided into six-mile squares called townships. With the formation of the Ohio Territory under the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, these township squares were used as the primary means of establishing local civil governments in the territory. After statehood, in 1804, the Ohio General Assembly prescribed the form and powers of township government.

In 1991 the Ohio General Assembly enacted legislation giving townships the ability to establish a “limited form of self government.” Less than a dozen townships have opted for this status, commonly referred to as Township Home Rule. While the law grants those townships that meet the specific criteria expanded legislative authority and more power to enforce township resolutions, townships remain unincorporated jurisdictions which may be significantly altered by action of the General Assembly, the board of

county commissioners, or municipal annexation. Indeed, municipal corporations annex significant parcels of township territory each year.

Townships most commonly provide resident services such as road maintenance, cemetery management, parks and recreation management, police and fire protection, solid waste disposal, and zoning regulations. For example, Ohio townships have direct responsibility for maintaining approximately 39,000 miles of roads and streets, and townships manage more than 1,800 township cemeteries.

The Face of Township Government

Since the adoption of the 1851 Ohio Constitution, the basic form of township government has remained relatively unchanged. Governed by three elected trustees serving four-year terms, this board of township trustees is the legislative authority and also fulfills many executive responsibilities as well. A fourth elected official, a township fiscal officer, is independent of the trustees, yet by law must work closely with them. The township fiscal officer’s duties include the recording of township proceedings and keeping records of township financial accounts.

Ohio Quick Facts

There are 1,308 townships in Ohio today. While each operates under the basic form of township government, they are quite varied in population size, annual operating budget, and range of services delivered to township residents.

- Road maintenance is the largest function of a township.
- Ohio first authorized township zoning in 1947.
- February 1st is designated as Township Day.

A Closer Look at Some Large Townships in Ohio...

Township	County	Total Disbursements* (Year Ending December 31, 2000)	Population ** (2000 Census)
Sylvania Township	Lucas	\$16,654,452	25,583
Jackson Township	Stark	\$16,123,425	37,484
Colerain Township	Hamilton	\$15,343,774	60,144
Boardman Township	Mahoning	\$12,363,318	42,518
Green Township	Hamilton	\$16,221,376	55,660
Austintown Township	Mahoning	\$10,106,427	38,001