CITY OF VINELAND, NJ

RESOLUTION NO. 2023- 548

A RESOLUTION ACKNOWLEDGING THAT THE CITY OF VINELAND GOVERNING BODY PUBLICLY DISCUSSED THE CY2023 BEST PRACTICES INVENTORY.

WHEREAS, New Jersey's State Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations Act (P.L. 2019, c.150) requires the Division of Local Government Services ("Division") to promulgate a Best Practices Inventory ("Inventory") to all municipalities, through which the State obtains vital information about the status of municipal government practices in New Jersey, and

WHEREAS, the CY2023 Inventory assesses each municipality's compliance with various laws and evaluates implementation of fiscal and operational best practices, and

WHEREAS, the Inventory answers provide taxpayers with an additional means of evaluating their municipality's performance, including how tax dollars are utilized; and

WHEREAS, the Inventory also identifies areas where municipalities may require further technical assistance; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the Appropriations Act, the Division must determine whether some portion of a municipality's CMPTRA and ETR Aid will be withheld based on the results of its Inventory; and

WHEREAS, the Inventory's questions are distributed amongst three scoring categories: Core Competencies, Best Practices, and Unscored Survey, and each municipality must receive a minimum score of 29 and greater on the Inventory in order to receive its full Final Aid payment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the governing body acknowledges that the CY2023 Best Practice Inventory was submitted to the NJ Department of Community Affairs, and it has been publicly discussed by the governing body, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOVED, that the Municipal Clerk is directed to file a certification with the Division confirming that the Inventory was discussed publicly.

Adopted:

_____
President of Council

ATTEST:

_____
City Clerk

Best Practices Inventory Online Platform

2023 Survey

Vineland City

Printable Current Answers

001	Unscored Survey	Budget

What portion of ARP LFRF dollars will your municipality obligate toward eligible uses by December 31, 2024?	[0.00] 100%

002	Core Competencies	Budget

Unless the Director sets forth a later date pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5.1, N.J.S.A. 40A:4-5 requires that calendar year municipalities approve their introduced budgets no later than February 10 (or August 10 for state fiscal year municipalities) and N.J.S.A. 40A:4-10 requires that calendar year municipalities adopt their budgets no later than March 20 (or September 20 for state fiscal year municipalities). Timely budget adoption helps a municipality avoid having to issue estimated tax bills or tax anticipation notes (TANs). Did your municipality introduce and adopt its current year budget no later than the dates provided by law or as extended by the Director in Local Finance Notice 2022-22? This question may only be answered N/A if your municipality's budget is subject to adoption by the Local Finance Board under State Supervision or if the Division instructed the municipality to delay budget adoption.	[1.00] Yes

003	Core Competencies	Budget

N.J.S.A. 40A:5-12 requires the chief financial officer of each municipality to file the Annual Financial Statement (AFS) with the Division no later than February 10 (August 10 for SFY municipalities). Local Finance Notice 2022-22 announced the extension of this deadline to March 3rd or the next regularly scheduled meeting of the governing body after said date. The statute specifies a $5 per day penalty payable by the CMFO for failing to file the AFS within 10 days of after the time fixed for filing. Did your municipality file its AFS by the above deadline?	[1.00] Yes

004	Core Competencies	Budget	
Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:2-40, the chief financial officer each municipality shall, before the end of the first month of the fiscal year, file its Annual Debt Statement with the Division of Local Government Services. Did your municipality file its Annual Debt Statement for the preceding fiscal year with the Division no later than January 31 (July 31 for SFY municipalities)?			[1.00] Yes
005	Core Competencies	Budget	
Has your municipality electronically submitted to the Division the User-Friendly Budget section of its adopted budget?			[1.00] Yes
006	Best Practices	Budget	
Has your municipality created an accumulated absence liability trust fund pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-15.5? Only answer N/A if your municipality 1) does not offer (for any employee hired after a certain date) payouts upon retirement for accumulated sick leave, and 2) no current employee has a grandfathered right to sick leave payouts upon retirement.			[0.50] Yes
007	Best Practices	Budget	
N.J.S.A. 40A:4-62.1 allows municipalities to establish a storm recovery reserve for purposes such as, but not limited to, snow, ice, and debris removal. Unexpended balances budgeted annually for storm recovery purposes may be lapsed into the reserve. Has your municipality established a storm recovery reserve to ensure the consistent availability of funds for this purpose?			[0.50] Yes
008	Core Competencies	Capital Projects	
Sections 7 and 8 of P.L. 2021, c. 184 amended N.J.S.A. 40A:4-43 and 4-44 to require any municipality having its own water system to reflect in its capital budget and capital program the water infrastructure improvements listed on the annual Water Quality Accountability Act (WQAA) capital improvement report submitted to the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The Local Finance Board recently adopted amendments to N.J.A.C. 5:30-4.3 incorporating this statutory change into the municipal budget process. If your municipality has its own water system, does the capital budget and program reflect the capital projects listed in the annual WQAA report submitted to DEP that fall within the time period of the municipality's capital budget and capital program?			[1.00] Yes

009	Core Competencies	Capital Projects	
Has your municipality adopted a capital program as defined by N.J.A.C. 5:30-4.2, meaning a moving, multi-year plan and schedule for capital projects (including prospective financing sources) and, when pertinent, first year operating costs and savings? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not have a capital budget and is not required to adopt a capital budget pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-4.3.			[1.00] Yes
010	Best Practices	Capital Projects	
Does your municipality have a schedule for road repair and improvement projects based on a priority scoring system?			[0.50] Yes
011	Unscored Survey	Capital Projects	
Please select the categories of projects that are listed in your municipality's most recent capital budget or capital program. More than one selection is permissible. If selecting Vehicles, please include the type of vehicle(s) in the Comment field. Only answer N/A if your municipality is not required to adopt a capital budget pursuant to N.J.A.C. 5:30-4.3.			Comment: SUVs, Ambulance, Dump Trucks,
012	Unscored Survey	Capital Projects	
As of April 20, 2021, a municipality may enter into project labor agreements for any public works project for construction, reconstruction, demolition or renovation, so long as 1) the project requires payment of prevailing wage under State law; and 2) the total project cost, exclusive of land acquisition costs, will equal or exceed $5 million. See Local Finance Notice 2021-20 for further details. Does your municipality require a project labor agreement for all or a portion of its eligible public works projects as permitted by P.L. 2021, c. 69?			[0.00] Yes
013	Core Competencies	Cybersecurity	
A cybersecurity incident response plan is a set of instructions to help detect, respond to, and recover from network security incidents. Plans such as those adopted by a governing body or from a municipality's JIF address areas such as cybercrime, data loss, and service outages. Does your municipality have a cybersecurity incident response plan?			[1.00] Yes

014	Core Competencies	Cybersecurity	
Are all municipal employees receiving ongoing cybersecurity training in malware detection, password construction, identifying security incidents and social engineering attacks?			[1.00] Yes
015	Core Competencies	Cybersecurity	
Does your municipality perform off-network daily incremental backups with weekly full backups of all data?			[1.00] Yes
016	Core Competencies	Cybersecurity	
Is Multi Factor Authentication (MFA) required for remote access to your municipality's network? If yes, please state under Comments where your municipality deploys MFA (e.g. banking, privileged users in-network, off-network back ups).			[1.00] Prospective
017	Core Competencies	Cybersecurity	
Does your municipality require a password policy for all network users requiring alphanumeric complexity, length requirements, and either 1) at least annual updating; or 2) a password meeting advanced standards such as those from the National Institute of Standards & Technology (NIST)?			[1.00] Yes
018	Best Practices	Cybersecurity	
Has your municipality enrolled for membership in the New Jersey Cybersecurity & Communications Integration Cell (NJCCIC)? An NJCCIC membership provides access to the latest cyber alerts, bulletins, training notifications and other important updates.			[0.50] Yes
019	Best Practices	Environment	
Have one or more public electric vehicle charging stations been installed on municipal property?			[0.00] No
020	Best Practices	Environment	
When purchasing new vehicles, does your municipality have a formal policy to purchase hybrid or altenative fuel vehicles whenever such vehicles are suited to the intended use? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not own any vehicles.			[0.00] No

021	Core Competencies	Ethics	
The Local Government Ethics Law, designed to ensure transparency in government, requires local government officers to file Financial Disclosure Statements (FDSs) annually. Compliance by local elected officials is required by N.J.S.A. 40A:9-22.6. Did all governing body members timely file their annual Financial Disclosure Statements for 2023 such that they were not issued a Notice of Violation (NOV) by the Local Finance Board? A "No" answer is permissible if the governing body members' NOV were rescinded by the Board. Only answer N/A if your municipality has an ordinance on the books establishing a municipal ethics board.			[1.00] Yes
022	Core Competencies	Ethics	
If your municipality has a municipal ethics board, did the municipal ethics board enforce the Financial Disclosure Statement (FDS) statute by issuing violations to local government officers (LGOs) who were on the 2023 roster but did not file the FDS by April 30, 2023? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not have an ordinance on the books establishing a municipal ethics board.			[1.00] N/A
023	Unscored Survey	Ethics	
N.J.S.A. 40A:9-22.21 of the Local Government Ethics Law requires a municipality that has established its own municipal ethics board to enact a municipal code of ethics. The municipal ethics code must be either identical to or more restrictive than the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:9-22.5. If your municipality has an ordinance on the books establishing a municipal ethics board, does your municipality have a municipal code of ethics that is identical to, or more or less restrictive than, the provisions of N.J.S.A. 40A:9-22.5?			[0.00] No ordinance establishing a municipal ethics board
024	Unscored Survey	Ethics	
If your municipality has an ethics board with at least a quorum for conducting business, how many matters were adjudicated by the municipal ethics board in 2022 (excluding FDS non-filing matters)? A municipal ethics board shall consist of six members, at least two of whom shall be public members. No more than three members shall be of the same political party.			[0.00] No ordinance establishing a municipal ethics board

025	Core Competencies	Financial Administration

At its July 2023 meeting, the Local Finance Board adopted an amendment to N.J.A.C. 5:30-8.2 that converted the previously suggested surety bond schedule for a CMFO to a mandatory minimum schedule. This change will come into effect on January 1, 2024. See https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/rules_docs/5_30/njac_5308.pdf for further details and to view the exposure index. Through a blanket bond or an individual bond, does your municipality provide a fidelity bond with faithful performance coverage for the CMFO that meets at least the minimum schedule set forth in N.J.A.C. 5:30-8.2?	[1.00] Yes

026	Core Competencies	Financial Administration

At its July 2023 meeting, the Local Finance Board adopted updates to N.J.A.C. 5:30-5.7 requiring municipalities to maintain a general ledger for not only the current fund, but also for all other funds. The updated N.J.A.C. 5:30-5.7 codifies previously issued guidance in Local Finance Notice CFO 2003-14 on maintaining general ledger accounting systems, except that all local units, including authorities and fire districts, are now required to post the totals for all funds to the general ledger on at least a monthly basis. See https://www.nj.gov/dca/divishttps://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/resources/rules_docs/5_30/njac_5305.pdf for further details. Does your municipality maintain a general ledger for its current fund and all other funds in accordance with N.J.A.C. 5:30-5.7?	[1.00] Yes

027	Core Competencies	Financial Administration

N.J.S.A. 40A:5-7 requires a synopsis of all audits, together with the auditor's recommendations, to be prepared and published by the municipal clerk at least once in the municipality's official newspaper or, if there is none, in a newspaper published in the local unit or, if there is no newspaper published in the local unit, in a newspaper having a general circulation in the municipality. If the municipal clerk fails to have publication of the synopsis and recommendations made within 30 days of receipt of the annual audit, the clerk shall be subject to a fine of $10.00 payable to the local unit for each day after the expiration of the 30 days that such publication fails to appear. At its July 2023 meeting, the Local Finance Board adopted updates to N.J.A.C. 5:30-6.4 that codifies the minimum content of the synopsis of audit along with the process for publishing the synopsis and corrective action plan. Does your municipality publish the synopsis of audit as required pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-7?	[1.00] Yes

028	Core Competencies	Financial Administration
Effective for CY2022/SFY2023 and CY2023/SFY2024 municipal budgets, the annual maximum contribution a municipality can appropriate for use by its volunteer fire companies or board of fire commissioners pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:14-34 is $161,526.00. In any municipality where there are more than three volunteer fire companies or fire districts, the governing body may appropriate an additional $50,000 annually for each additional volunteer company or fire district. At least 50% of the municipality's annual appropriation must be used by a volunteer fire company or board of fire commissioners for the purchase of fire equipment, materials and supplies. N.J.S.A. 40A:14-34 requires the volunteer fire company or fire district to provide the municipal governing body, on an annual basis, an accounting of the use of all municipal funds. See Local Finance Notice 2022-19 for further details. Is your municipality obtaining from each volunteer fire company or fire district an accounting of the use of all municipal funds?		[1.00] Yes

029	Core Competencies	Financial Administration
N.J.S.A. 40:5-2 limits to $125,000 the maximum annual dollar amount that a municipality may contribute to a duly incorporated first aid and emergency or volunteer ambulance or rescue squad association, except that if any such associations experience extraordinary need, a municipality may contribute an additional amount of not more than $70,000 annually. Whenever the total annual contribution exceeds $70,000, the municipal CFO shall receive an audit performed by a CPA or RMA of the association's current year financial records which shall certify that such records are being maintained in accordance with sound accounting principles. If your municipality contributed in excess of $70,000 toward a first aid, ambulance, rescue or EMS squad in its current budget, was an audit performed pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:5-2?		[1.00] N/A

030	Core Competencies	Financial Administration
Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:5-14(d), a local unit's investment policies shall be based on a cash flow analysis prepared by the CFO, with those policies being commensurate with the nature and size of the funds held by the local unit. Has your municipality conducted a cash flow analysis of its deposited and invested funds, and, based on that analysis, does your municipality's cash management plan set policies for your municipality's investments that consider preservation of capital, liquidity, current and historical investment returns, diversification, maturity requirements, costs and fees associated with the investment and, when appropriate, policies of investment instrument administrators?		[1.00] Yes

031	Best Practices	Financial Administration
N.J.A.C. 5:30-8.3(a)(3) establishes a schedule of minimum dollar amounts for tax collector surety bonding. However, to provide a higher level of security for public funds, municipalities are encouraged to adopt the more stringent schedule for tax collector surety bonding specified in N.J.A.C. 5:30-8.3(a)(4). Has your municipality adopted the more stringent surety bonding schedule for tax collectors set forth in N.J.A.C. 5:30-8.3(a)(4) or higher?		[0.50] Yes
032	Best Practices	Financial Administration
N.J.A.C. 5:30-8.4 (a) establishes a schedule of minimum dollar amounts for municipal court surety bonding, specifically for municipal judges and municipal court administrators. However, subsection (b) of 5:30-8.4 encourages municipalities to adopt a more stringent schedule for municipal court surety bonding that is specified in the subsection. Has your municipality adopted the more stringent surety bonding schedule for municipal court judges and court administrators set forth in N.J.A.C. 5:30-8.4(b) or higher?		[0.50] Yes
033a	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling
How is residential solid waste collected?		[0.00] Municipal pickup through shared service w/ another local unit
033b	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling
If your municipality provides residential solid waste pickup, or contracts with a private hauler or another local unit to do so, how many times per week is pickup scheduled for?		[0.00] Once per-week
033c	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling
If residential solid waste is collected through a private hauler contracted by the municipality, how many bids did your municipality receive in response to its most recent advertisement for residential solid waste collection or a joint solid waste/recycling collection bid?		[0.00] N/A

033d	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling	
Is residential solid waste picked up utilizing a truck with an automated single arm? Answer N/A if residents contract directly with a private hauler or bring garbage to a central location run by a local government.			[0.00] No
033e	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling	
If your municipality's residential solid waste pickup is done through a private hauler contracted directly by residents, how many hauler services are currently servicing residents?			[0.00] N/A
034a	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling	
How is residential recycling collected?			[0.00] Municipal pickup through shared service w/ another local unit
034b	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling	
What type of residential recycling program does your municipality have? Select only one.			[0.00] Single-stream
034c	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling	
Is residential recycling picked up utilizing a truck with an automated single arm?			[0.00] No
034d	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling	
If your municipality provides residential recycling pickup, or contracts with a private hauler or another local unit to do so, how many times per week is pickup scheduled for?			[0.00] Once per-week
034e	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling	
If residential recycling is collected by a private hauler procured separately by your municipality, how many bids did your municipality receive in response to its most recent advertisement for residential recycling collection?			[0.00] N/A

034f	Unscored Survey	Garbage & Recycling	
If your municipality's residential recycling pickup is done through a private hauler contracted directly by residents, how many hauler services are currently servicing residents?			[0.00] N/A
035	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
If additional funding were to be made available for the Lead Grant Assistance Program (LGAP), would your municipality be interested in applying? Answer "N/A" if your municipality will have no local lead inspection activities that could be funded by the grant program or does not have any dwellings eligible for inspection. If "Yes", provide in the Comments a requested funding amount. If "No" or "N/A", enter "Not Applicable" in the Comments.			[0.00] Yes Comment: $200,000
036	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
What portion of LGAP dollars has your municipality obligated to date?			[0.00] N/A
037	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
Does your municipality have a permanent local agency that is currently conducting inspections for lead-based paint hazards in rental dwellings and enforcing the provisions of P.L. 2021, c. 182? If your answer is "Other" fill-in the name of the municipal agency under Comments. If your answer is "Shared Service", please fill-in the name of the agency and the local unit providing the service under Comments. Further information concerning the requirements of this recently enacted law are available at https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/codes/resources/leadpaint.html.			[0.00] Code Enforcement (non-UCC)
038	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
If your municipality does not have a permanent local agency or a shared service currently conducting inspections for lead-based paint hazards in rental dwellings to enforce the provisions of P.L. 2021, c. 182, has your municipality retained a lead evaluation contractor to provide paid lead inspection services?			[0.00] N/A
039a	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
Pursuant to P.L. 2021, c. 182, has your municipality identified rental dwellings that have experienced tenant turnover since July 22, 2022?			[0.00] Yes

039b	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
If your municipality has identified rental dwellings that have experienced tenant turnover since July 22, 2022, have all of those units been inspected prior to re-occupancy?			[0.00] Yes
040a	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
How many visual lead-based paint inspections did your municipality conduct (directly, through shared services, or through a certified lead evaluation contractor) since 2022? Please only include numbers (no text or explanation) under Comments to facilitate tabulation.			Comment: 3,532
040b	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
How many dust wipe-sampling lead-based paint inspections did your municipality conduct (directly, through shared services, or through a certified lead evaluation contractor) since 2022? Please only include numbers (no text or explanation) under Comments to facilitate tabulation.			Comment: 0
040c	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
How many post-remediation lead-based paint inspections has your municipality conducted (directly, through shared services, or through a certified lead evaluation contractor) since 2022? Please only include numbers (no text or explanation) under Comments to facilitate tabulation.			Comment: 0
041a	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
How many lead safe certifications have been issued by your municipality since 2022? Please only include numbers (no text or explanation) under Comments to facilitate tabulation.			Comment: 0
041b	Unscored Survey	Lead Remediation	
What is the number of lead safe certifications issued by the municipality in the past fiscal year, as used by the municipality? Please only include numbers (no text or explanation) under Comments to facilitate tabulation.			Comment: 0

042	Core Competencies	Personnel	
For any municipal officers and employees NOT required by contract or municipal policy to make health benefit contributions following the Chapter 78 health benefit contribution grid (excluding Rx and dental), is your municipality requiring those employees to contribute at least 1.5% of base salary towards health benefits pursuant to P.L. 2010, c. 2? See Local Finance Notices 2010-12 and 2011-20R for further details. Answer N/A if all of your municipality's officers and employees are required by contract or municipal policy to contribute at least the amount required by P.L. 2011, c. 78 for health benefits.			[1.00] N/A
043	Core Competencies	Personnel	
Payments for waivers filed before May 21, 2010 and maintained continuously since, cannot exceed fifty percent (50%) of the amount saved by the local unit as a result of the employee’s waiver of coverage. For waivers filed on or after May 21, 2010, which is the effective date of P.L. 2010, c. 2, payments cannot exceed the lesser of twenty-five percent (25%) of the amount saved by the local unit as a result of the waiver, or $5,000. When calculating an employee’s waiver payment, the local unit must deduct the employee’s healthcare contribution obligation from the total premium cost. Local units have sole discretion as to whether or not to offer employees payments for waiver of health benefits, and may offer waiver payments below the statutory maximum. Health benefit waiver payments are statutorily excluded from collective bargaining. See Local Finance Notices 2010-12 and 2016-10 for further discussion on health benefit waiver payments. Are your municipality’s healthcare waiver payments at or below the statutory maximum? “N/A” is only applicable where the municipality does not make payments in lieu of health benefits.			[1.00] Yes
044	Core Competencies	Personnel	
The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) is a federal law requiring that overtime pay must be paid for all hours over 40 hours in a work week except for those employees classified as exempt and thus not entitled to overtime. Management employees such as elected officials, managers/administrators, municipal clerks, CFOs, public works superintendents, police chiefs and other department heads are typically classified as having exempt status and thus not entitled to overtime pay. Other municipal employees may also be classified as exempt under the FLSA (please consult labor counsel for detailed guidance). Exempt status also precludes overtime pay for time worked during emergencies, attendance at night meetings and participation in training sessions. Compensated leave time in lieu of cash payments is considered a form of overtime pay unless such leave is utilized in the same pay period. Does your municipality refrain from paying overtime to employees classified as exempt under the FLSA?			[1.00] Yes

045	Core Competencies	Personnel	
Has your municipality reviewed and updated its employee personnel manual/handbook within the past three years or upon the conclusion of each of your municipality's collective negotiated agreements (CNAs)? If yes, please provide in the Comments section the date which the personnel manual was officially updated using the MM/DD/YYYY format. If not yes, please type "Did Not Answer Yes" into the comment box.			[1.00] Yes Comment: Policy Manual 5/22/2023 Employee Handbook 03/23/2021
046	Core Competencies	Personnel	
At its July 2023 meeting, the Local Finance Board updated N.J.A.C. 5:30-16.2 to require a municipality's purchasing agent, certified public works manager, and business administrator/municipal manager to register for GovConnect by November 1, 2023. If your municipality has one or more of the above-referenced titles, have the individuals in those titles registered for GovConnect?			[1.00] Yes
047	Best Practices	Personnel	
Has your municipality established by ordinance an anti-nepotism policy that, at minimum, only authorizes the hiring the family members/relatives of municipal officials and employees if the individuals involved would not work in a direct supervisory relationship, or in job positions in which a conflict of interest could arise. The term “family member/relatives” should be defined to include but not necessarily be limited to spouses, children, siblings, parents, in-laws, and step-relatives.			[0.50] Yes
048	Unscored Survey	Personnel	
Does your municipality currently have an unlicensed individual serving as an acting municipal clerk, tempoary chief municipal finance officer, temporary purchasing agent, and/or a temporary chief public works manager? Select as many as are applicable or None of the Above.			
049	Unscored Survey	Personnel	
Does your municipality currently retain a chief financial officer through a professional services contract?			[0.00] No

050	Core Competencies	Procurement	
The purchase of insurance coverage and consultant services is a limited exception to public bidding by virtue of being deemed an Extraordinary Unspecifiable Service (EUS) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:11-5(a)(ii) and 40A:11-5(1)(m). Page 3 of Local Finance Notice AU-2022-2 for further details. The standard EUS certification declaration (do not submit the form to DLGS) is available at https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/programs/lpcl_docs/eus_letter.pdf. If your municipality has procured insurance under the EUS exception to public bidding, has your municipality followed the procedural requirements of an EUS in doing so?			[1.00] Yes
051	Best Practices	Procurement	
If your municipality contracts with an insurance broker for health insurance, and said contract exceeds the Local Public Contracts Law (LPCL) bid threshold, is your municipality's health insurance broker being procured through a competitive contracting or sealed bid process conducted pursuant to the Local Public Contracts Law? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not contract with an insurance broker for health insurance or, if it does, the contract does not exceed your municipality's LPCL bid threshold.			[0.50] Yes
052	Best Practices	Procurement	
Insurance broker fees dependent on the amount of health insurance premiums or fees paid by the municipality are vulnerable to abuse as brokers could face conflicting incentives in seeking lower-cost health insurance alternatives. If your municipality contracts with an insurance broker for health insurance, is the structure for broker payments set at a flat-fee rather than on a commission basis to mitigate the risk of a broker recommending more expensive health insurance coverage to earn higher fees? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not contract with an insurance broker for health insurance.			[0.50] Yes
053	Core Competencies	Shared Services	
N.J.S.A. 40A:65-4(b) requires a copy of each shared services agreement to be filed with the Division of Local Government Services. Has your municipality filed with the Division the most current copy of each shared services agreement under which the municipality provides one or more services to another local unit as defined by N.J.S.A. 40A:65-3 of the Uniform Shared Services and Consolidation Act? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not provide a shared service to another local unit.			[1.00] Yes

054a	Unscored Survey	Shared Services	
If your municipality currently provides a chief financial officer, tax collector, tax assessor, municipal clerk, qualified purchasing agent, certified public works manager, municipal treasurer, and/or a public works superintendant to another municipality pursuant to a shared services agreement, please select one or more of the options provided and list under Comments each municipality (and the county in which that municipality is located) along with the position being provided to that municipality. If your municipality currently provides none of these positions pursuant to a shared services agreement, select None of the Above and insert N/A into Comments.			Comment: N/A
054b	Unscored Survey	Shared Services	
If the answer to Question 54a is yes, did one or more of the identified shared service agreements result in the dismissal of a tenured official? If yes, please insert under Comments 1) the position or positions where an agreement resulted in the dismissal of a tenured official; and 2) an estimate of the cost savings anticipated to be achieved by the participating municipalities at the outset of the agreement. If the answer is No or N/A, please insert "No" or "N/A" under Comments. See LFN 2018-3R for more information on this provision of the Common Sense Shared Service Act.			[0.00] No Comment: No
055a	Unscored Survey	Shared Services	
The Local Efficiency Achievement Program (LEAP) provides funding for local government shared services and consolidation feasibility studies, along with shared services and consolidation start-up costs up to $400,000. Is your municipality interested in LEAP?			[0.00] Yes
055b	Unscored Survey	Shared Services	
What does your municipality see as the most significant barrier, if any, to implementing shared services?			[0.00] No barriers
056a	Unscored Survey	Special Improvement Districts	
Has your municipality designated one or more special improvement districts (SIDs) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:56-71?			[0.00] Yes

056b	Unscored Survey	Special Improvement Districts	
If your municipality has designated one or more special improvement districts (SIDs) pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:56-71, does one or more SID have a business improvement zone established pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40:56-71.1 et seq.? Answer N/A if your municipality does not have a SID.			[0.00] Yes
057	Core Competencies	Transparency	
Are your municipality's codified and uncodified ordinances, including all current salary ordinances, available online?			[1.00] Yes
058	Core Competencies	Transparency	
Does your municipality maintain an up-to-date municipal website containing at minimum the following: past three years adopted budgets; the current year proposed budget (including the full adopted budget for the current year when approved by the governing body); most recent annual financial statement and audits; notification(s) for solicitation of bids and RFPs; and meeting dates, minutes and agendas for the governing body, planning board, board of adjustment and all commissions?			[1.00] Yes
059	Core Competencies	Transparency	
N.J.S.A. 34:13A-8.2 requires public employers, including municipalities, to file with the Public Employment Relations Commission (PERC) a copy of all contracts negotiated with public employee representatives. This includes, but is not limited to, collective bargaining agreements, memoranda of understanding, contract amendments, and "side letter" or "side bar" agreements. Copies of same may be emailed to contracts@perc.state.nj.us. Has your municipality filed all current contracts with PERC? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not have any employee labor unions.			[1.00] Yes

060	Core Competencies	Transparency	
Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 34:13A-16.8(d)(2), PERC requires a summary of the cost impact associated with a municipality's completed contracts for all bargaining units. Police and fire contracts have one summary form, while non-police and fire contracts have another form. The summary forms and filing instructions are located at https://www.state.nj.us/perc/conciliation/contracts/. Has your municipality filed the required PERC summary forms for all current completed labor agreements? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not have any employee labor unions.			[1.00] Yes
061	Core Competencies	Transparency	
In accordance with Governor Murphy's Executive Order 267 dated October 8, 2021 and outlined in LFN 2022-08 dated March 2, 2022, municipalities and counties were required to provide DLGS with a copy of all American Rescue Plan (ARP) LFRF reports filed with U.S. Treasury, including Project and Expenditure Reports, Interim Reports, and Recovery Plan and Performance Reports?. Did your municipality file with DLGS all reports filed with Treasury? Only answer N/A if your municipality refused ARP LFRF Funding			[1.00] Yes
062	Core Competencies	Transparency	
P.L. 2023, c. 30, known as the "Elections Transparency Act," made various significant changes to New Jersey's pay-to-play laws. One of these changes is the prohibition on imposing pay-to-play provisions that are more restrictive than those in State law. The repeal of N.J.S.A. 40A:11-51, the statute that originally authorized local pay-to-play restrictions or grandfathered existing ones, is effective retroactive to January 1, 2023. See Local Finance Notice 2023-14 for further details. Has your municipality repealed any local pay-to-play ordinances or resolutions originally authorized or grandfathered by N.J.S.A. 40A:11-51? Answer N/A if your municipality did not have local pay-to-play restrictions on the books.			[1.00] N/A
063	Best Practices	Transparency	
Does your municipality feature a link on its website to the Division of Taxation's Property Tax Relief Program webpage at https://www.state.nj.us/treasury/taxation/relief.shtml?			[0.50] Yes

064	Core Competencies	Utilities	
P.L. 2022, c.107 (N.J.S.A. 48:2-29.57 et seq. or the "Utility Reporting Law") requires the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) to collect data from both investor-owned utilities and local government-owned utilities regarding service to residential and commercial customers. The reporting template is available at https://nj.gov/bpu/agenda/doc/PL107ReportingRequirementTemplateFinal.xlsx. If your municipality has a water, sewer, or electric system, has your municipality complied with the reporting requirement in the Utility Reporting Law?			[1.00] Yes
065	Core Competencies	Utilities	
P.L. 2023, c. 33, signed on April 5, 2023, required that all investor-owned utilities and all local units that directly bill residential ratepayers for water and/or sewer sign a vendor contract with Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to participate in the Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP). See Local Finance Notice 2023-09 for further details. If your municipality directly bills for water and/or sewer, did your municipality enter into an agreement with DCA to participate in LIHWAP?			[1.00] Yes
066	Core Competencies	Utilities	
Section 4 of P.L. 2021, c. 317 establishes a Winter Termination Program allowing eligible residential customers to avoid service shutoff from November 15 through March 15 for non-payment of water, sewer, or electric service provided by a local unit. See Local Finance Notice 2023-09 for further details. Has your municipality notified its residential ratepayers about the Winter Termination Program in the manner required under law with respect to the utility services it provides?			[1.00] Yes
067	Core Competencies	Utilities	
P.L. 2021, c. 97 requires municipalities with their own water, sewer, or electric service to provide monthly notice to residential ratepayers concerning local utility service and bill payment assistance. Please review Local Finance Notice 2023-09 for more information on the law's requirements. Is your municipality complying with the monthly notice requirements of P.L. 2021, c. 97? Only answer N/A if your municipality does not have its own water, sewer, or electric service.			[1.00] Yes

Return to Question List (../?id=0d1678b1-a95e-ee11-be6e-001dd806513c)

Best Practices Inventory Online Platform

2023 Survey

Vineland City

Scoring

Current Score: 41.00

Score	Aid Withheld
0 - 20	100% of final aid payment withheld
21 - 24	50% of final aid payment withheld
25 - 28	25% of final aid payment withheld
29 +	No aid withholding

DIVISION OF
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
SERVICES

Local Finance Notice

LFN 2023-17

October 2, 2023

DCA NJ Department of Community Affairs

Philip D. Murphy
Governor

Tahesha L. Way
Lieutenant Governor

Jacquelyn A. Suárez
Acting Commissioner
& Director

Contact

Website
www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs

E-mail
dlgs@dca.nj.gov

Phone
609.292.6613

Mail and Delivery
101 South Broad St.
PO Box 803
Trenton, New Jersey
08625-0803

Distribution
Administrators/Managers
Municipal CFOs
Municipal Clerks
Municipal Procurement Officials
Tax Collectors
Municipal Elected Officials

2023 Municipal Best Practices Inventory

Language authorizing the Best Practices Inventory is included in the FY2024 Appropriations Act. Pursuant to law, the Division of Local Government Services ("Division") has promulgated an updated Best Practices Inventory to all municipalities, through which the State obtains vital information about the status of municipal government practices in New Jersey.

The 2023 Inventory assesses each municipality's compliance with various laws and evaluates the implementation of fiscal and operational best practices. Inventory answers provide taxpayers with an additional means of evaluating their municipality's performance. The Inventory also identifies areas where municipalities may require further technical assistance. Furthering this objective, the Inventory contains an unscored survey section soliciting information on a variety of topics.

All municipalities, including those on a State Fiscal Year budget cycle, must submit their completed Inventory to the Division by close of business **Friday November 3, 2023**. The Division strongly recommends completing and filing the Inventory as soon as possible so any technical or substantive issues can be resolved in a timely fashion. No post-submission answer changes will be permitted.

Furthering the Division's implementation of technology solutions, the Best Practices Inventory continues to be hosted on the internet-based platform that debuted in 2019. Platform instructions and a helpful FAQ document concerning log-in and access are also provided.

The Division must determine whether some portion of a municipality's final formula aid payment will be withheld based on the results of its Inventory. A municipality's full final formula aid payment represents the maximum amount of aid that is subject to withholding. Please review Local Finance Notices 2023-12 and 2023-13 for further information on FY24 State Aid to municipalities.

Question Content and Scoring

The 2023 Best Practices Inventory features new and repeat questions on the following topics:

- Ethics
- Personnel
- Budget
- Financial Administration
- Capital Projects
- Transparency
- Procurement
- Cybersecurity
- Lead Remediation
- Shared Services
- Special Imp. Districts
- Solid Waste
- Recycling
- Utilities
- Environment

A total of 67 questions are distributed amongst three scoring categories: Core Competencies (36 questions), Best Practices (12 questions), and Unscored Survey (18 questions). Eight (8) questions in the Unscored Survey category are divided into multiple subparts to better facilitate data tabulation. The Division has introduced a total of 15 new scored questions to the 2023 Inventory. Each municipality must receive a **minimum score of 29** on the Inventory to receive its full Final Aid payment.

Core Competencies address statutory and regulatory compliance obligations and other areas critical to sound municipal finance and operations. These questions score 1 point each, with positive credit awarded for "Yes" answers as well as "Prospective" and "N/A" responses when permitted by the question. Answers of "Prospective," which apply to certain new questions, should only be used when a municipality is committed to making good faith efforts to implement the practice in the upcoming year. New questions where "Prospective" is not a permitted answer may be cured prior to submitting the Inventory.

The 2023 Inventory also includes a Best Practices category, which involves fiscal and operational practices that are of significant benefit to many municipalities but are not foundational in nature or uniformly applicable to all municipalities. All questions in the Best Practices category are worth one-half (1/2) point, with positive credit awarded for "Yes" answers as well as "N/A" responses when permitted by the question. Please note that "Prospective" responses are not permitted responses under the Best Practices category.

Answers of "N/A" are only appropriate if a specific requirement does not apply to a given municipality; however, please note that some questions limit "N/A" responses to certain circumstances. Municipalities answering "N/A" should explain why the question is not applicable in the comment space.

There is a total of 48 scored questions (Core Competencies + Best Practices) for a total of 42 points. The thresholds for aid withholding are as follows:

Inventory Score	Final Payment Amount Disbursed	Impact on final 5% aid payment
29 and greater	100%	No withholding
25-28	75%	Lose 25% of final formula aid payment
21-24	50%	Lose 50% of final formula aid payment
0-20	0%	Lose 100% of final formula aid payment

Questions in the Best Practices category are considered "extra credit" because the Inventory's scoring threshold is based on the number of Core Competencies for which the Division determined a municipality should earn positive credit, rather than Core Competencies and Best Practices combined. Thus, positive credit for Best Practices questions helps offset Core Competencies for which a municipality does not earn positive credit.

Unscored Survey questions are meant to gather information and do not count toward a municipality's final score, although their completion is a required component of the Inventory. Answers to these questions will help determine where municipalities may require additional assistance and where the Division of Local Government Services and the Department of Community Affairs may need to prioritize technical assistance resources. Responses vary from "Yes/No" to multiple-choice to fill-in.

Completing and Submitting the Inventory

A municipality must answer all questions before the Best Practices platform will permit submitting the Inventory. Certain questions require information to be typed into the Comment section before the online platform counts the question as completely answered. Please refer to the Instructions for further details. Please email Matthew.Gallello@dca.nj.gov if you require technical assistance. For assistance regarding the Inventory questions, contact bestpractices@dca.nj.gov. Failing to submit the Inventory is deemed equivalent to a zero score.

The municipality's Chief Finance Officer, Chief Administrative Officer and, starting this year, the Municipal Clerk must all certify the Inventory using the Online Platform. The Chief Administrative Officer is an individual who, regardless of title, is responsible for the municipality's day-to-day operations. If a municipality does not have a Business Administrator or Municipal Manager, this person would be whichever individual (e.g., Municipal Clerk, CMFO) is responsible for running day-to-day operations. Every municipality has a Chief Administrative Officer.

The Municipal Clerk must also certify that the Inventory and the results thereof were or will be discussed at a public meeting, inserting the date on which the meeting was or will be held; the inventory results and the certification of same by the Clerk and the chief administrative and financial officers referenced in the meeting minutes. The purpose of the acknowledgement requirement is to ensure that local officials are apprised of their municipality's Best Practices Inventory response. Please do not wait for the Best Practices Inventory to be discussed at a governing body meeting before submitting the Inventory.

State Fiscal Year municipalities have the same Friday, November 3, 2023, deadline as Calendar Year municipalities.

Appeals of Best Practices Scores

A municipality may appeal its score to the Director **up to one week prior to the submission deadline**, but not before submitting its Best Practices Inventory. Appeals must be submitted by close of business **Friday, October 27, 2023,** via email to bestpractices@dca.nj.gov with the heading "Best Practices Appeal." The Director may exercise discretion upon finding that a municipality's individual circumstances so warrant. Municipalities that wish to submit an appeal should do so in conjunction with their Inventory submission.

Approved: Jacquelyn A. Suárez, Acting Commissioner & Director

Document	Internet Address
FY24 App. Act	https://pub.njleg.state.nj.us/Bills/2022/AL23/74_.PDF
Best Practices Platform	https://njdca.dynamics365portals.us/
BPI Instructions	https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/best_practices_docs/BPI%20Online%20Platform%20Instructions%20-%202023.pdf
Log-In & Access FAQ	https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/best_practices_docs/BPI%20Log-In%20and%20Access%20FAQ.pdf
Question List	https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/best_practices_docs/2023%20DLGS%20Best%20Practices%20Inventory%20Questions.xlsx
LFN 2023-12	https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/lfns/23/2023-12.pdf
LFN 2023-13	https://www.nj.gov/dca/divisions/dlgs/lfns/23/2023-13.pdf