

A BETTER PLACE FOR TENNESSEE

Delivering the Vision through Strategic Projects

The University of Tennessee (UT) Institute for Public Service (IPS) strategic plan is driving continuous improvement in our organization. Stakeholders, customers, friends, supporters and staff from across the state of Tennessee have identified a number of service improvements and expansions necessary for IPS to meet both present and future needs. This brief summary touches on just a few of the promising changes developed to deliver the vision for Tennessee as a global leader with thriving business and industry, efficient and effective government, and vibrant communities.

Some of the more urgent needs include the need for faster and expanded response, sustainable funding for operations, and better facilities in each region of the state. Funding derived from federal, state and local sources provides a strong financial foundation for the service of IPS, yet stakeholders supporting the strategic plan recognized that IPS should do more to expand and protect the services of IPS agencies. This requires IPS to step beyond the old model for funding of services based on appropriations and fees with an increased focus on non-appropriated revenues and fundraising.



ENDOWED CONSULTANTS

Universities, including UT, have established endowed faculty positions to allow academic departments to expand specialties and sustain critical faculty positions. Borrowing from this concept, IPS has developed a program to create a reliable and permanent revenue stream to support a higher level of customer service with endowed consultant positions. Each agency has already started to set aside funds from operating revenues and other donations to leverage and to match new donations for endowed positions.

Endowed consultants are one of the strategies we're implementing to sustain and improve services and ensure timely response. The goal is a tall order indeed, as an endowment will require at least \$3.5 million in principal for each position. Each agency is working to establish five endowed consultants over the next five years and will need to raise \$17.5 million in contributions.

TRAINING CENTER

Training classes outside of Knoxville are usually held in hotels and similar facilities, resulting in extra costs, booking and logistical issues. This also often results in holding training at facilities unable to meet the technology and comfort needs of IPS customers.

The concept under study is the development of state-of-the-art training facilities in each grand division of the state by 2020, with the first facility anticipated in Middle Tennessee.

INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CONSULTANTS - LOWER RESPONSE TIMES WITH GREATER CONSULTANT AVAILABILITY

IPS customers- Tennessee's cities, counties, industries, state agencies and law enforcement agencies - tell us that IPS consultants are experienced, talented and hard-working, and delivering great service every day. These same customers tell us that we need to increase our capacity by employing additional consultants. At times, requests for assistance may require days or weeks before that assistance can be provided or the request can be fulfilled by our dedicated staff.

Consultants develop solutions to the problems facing customers and assist, advise, research and train on the important issues of government and industry. Fees are low and the response is typically professional and appreciated. As with any organization that provides exceptional service at an affordable price, the demand for service can exceed the capacity to respond. During development of the 2016 IPS strategic plan customers were very clear that additional consultants are necessary and critical to the success of customers and the state.



SCHOLARSHIPS FOR TRAINING

Some of the local governments, law enforcement agencies and industries that most need the assistance of IPS agencies are unable to participate in training because of costs, including program fees and travel expenses. The focus of this compelling need to fund a scholarship program to allow IPS to reduce or eliminate fees and expenses that may serve as a barrier to customer participation.

Reasons for participation include: a) we're a partner in and part of a higher education institution and academic community; b) we want to be good citizens in the constituent groups we serve; c) encouraging study and work in fields relating to our customer base is good business and fosters better relationships.

PUBLIC SERVICE AND MANUFACTURING INTERNSHIPS

The agencies of IPS sponsor local government and manufacturing interns each semester with students from campuses across the state. The reason we are involved is to ensure a pipeline of talented, prepared and highly qualified individuals with the training and experience to serve business and government, or to one day become IPS consultants and specialists.

Public service internships are not limited to students at the UT campuses; they typically are available to students attending colleges and universities throughout the state, with a desire to work in local government and industry in research and policy support. The intern experience provides students with exposure to community service and provides a venue of support to local governments from academic and research resources. The compelling need is for funding to increase endowments that support student internships for areas of specific customer needs.



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