6th URBAN INNOVATION IN ILLINOIS AWARDS COMPETITION

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

QUALITY OF LIFE

SERVICE DELIVERY
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## 2002 Application Form

### Panel of Judges

### Index (Governments and Innovations)

### The History of Urban Innovation in Illinois
URBAN INNOVATION IN ILLINOIS (UII) is a consortium of professional and local governmental groups that has identified, documented and promoted outstanding innovative practices in Illinois governments since 1986.

UII is the Illinois branch of the international Fiscal Austerity and Urban Innovation (FAUI) Project (www.src.uchicago.edu/depts/faui/archive.html). This year UII conducted its Sixth Awards Competition, recognizing thirteen Winners and seven Honorable Mentions at a ceremony on Thursday, August 8, 2002, at the LaSalle Bank in downtown Chicago.

The Urban Innovation Awards were open to applicants from local governments, intergovernmental groups, special or regional districts, departments or agencies of the State of Illinois and Federal government in Illinois. The Awards Announcement and Application Form is reprinted here. A Blue Ribbon Panel (listed below) of local government officials and experts discussed and evaluated the merits of over fifty applications submitted for consideration. The entries were judged using the following five criteria:

- Potential for applicability and continued use in other governments;
- Innovation and originality both nationally and in Illinois;
- Measurable improved service quality;
- Improvement in productivity, such as increased service per dollar; and
- Creativity of the implementation process, such as winning support among potential opponents.

Honorable Mentions were given to entries that were excellent ‘best practice’ or ‘best in class’ examples of how to implement a program, but not necessarily the first of their kind in Illinois or the United States.
Urban Innovation Awards were given for activities in six areas in 2002:

1. **Citizen Involvement**: Involving citizens in the workings of government and programs.

2. **Economic Development**: Encouraging or enhancing the economic base of a community.

3. **Fiscal Responsibility**: Implementing programs that help governments meet the challenge of allocating scarce resources to deliver services and protect a community's financial health.

4. **Intergovernmental Cooperation**: Establishing cooperative arrangements between groups of governments and/or government agencies to achieve common goals.

5. **Quality of Life**: Achieving a demonstrable impact on community vitality through policy leadership by addressing issues or problems facing the community.

6. **Service Delivery**: Innovative ways to deliver basic services.

Each of the above was divided into two population categories;
(1) governments 25,000 and over and
(2) governments under 25,000.

Summaries of these innovations were taken from application materials submitted by the award winners.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge the generous support that has made UII work so successfully over many years, especially from: Burton Ditkowsky and Delphi Capital Corporation; John Filan and FPT & W, Ltd.; Roland Calia and the Gryphon Foundation; Marianne Shank and the Illinois Government Finance Officers Association (IGFOA); William Morris and Kirkpatrick Pettis; Mary A. Laraia, Jason McDougal, Stuart Goodpasture, Robert G. Mau and Todd C. Sholeen of the LaSalle Bank; Richard Ciccarone and McDonnell Investment Management; H. Woods Bowman and the Public Services Program of DePaul University; and Norman Walzer and Western Illinois University.

Many helpful participants listed above were key in the application process all across the State. Woods Bowman led the evaluation and Awards selection process, helped by our Blue Ribbon Panel. Serene Wise at IIT and Mary Laraia and others at the LaSalle Bank led the Awards Presentation efforts and preparation of this helpful brochure.

Terry Nichols Clark
Professor of Sociology and Coordinator
Fiscal Austerity and Urban Innovation Project
University of Chicago
THE WINNERS
**CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT**

Involving citizens in the workings of government and programs.

**WINNER**

Village of Woodridge for its Back-to-School-Bash.

With the Back-to-School-Bash, B2SB, the Village teaches citizenship by giving its young citizens ownership of the event.

**PROBLEM:** In 2000 the Village of Woodridge participated for the first time in National Youth Service Day. Students answered the question: “What does a community that cares about youth look like?” According to the students, a community that cares offers its youth opportunities to volunteer for special events and community service. Now, the Village staff faced the problem: How to get these young citizens involved in meaningful community programs.

**INNOVATION:** Students and Village staff brainstormed together and came up with a new concept, a Back-to-School-Bash, a community-oriented positive start to the new school year. The Woodridge Police Department’s Youth Coordinator pulled together key community organizations for the event. Students and parents served on planning committees and with the help of the Youth Coordinator designed activities to promote interaction between the students and the community. Over 800 junior high school students participated in this first B2SB in 2001. They were joined by more than 100 volunteers which included teachers, police officers, Village staff, parents, high school students and representatives of community organizations. It was a decided success.
WINNER

Park District of Franklin Park for James Park Redevelopment.

Franklin Park’s extraordinary effort to involve citizens whose native language is not English takes park planning to a new level.

PROBLEM: In Franklin Park, James Park was underutilized by nearby residents. These primarily Spanish-speaking residents had difficulty getting to the park across a busy and potentially dangerous roadway. Once they braved heavy traffic, they found only outdated play equipment in the park.

Furthermore, the Spanish-English language barrier hindered communication with the Park District.

INNOVATION: The Park District decided to develop a Master Plan for redeveloping James Park. For the first time in Franklin Park, a bilingual Parks Amenities Survey was used to collect the residents’ needs and wishes for the site. A community meeting was called; and, invitations were hand-delivered to the residents of the James Park neighborhood. Over 200 families responded to the Survey and fifty residents attended the meeting which featured a bilingual presentation. Next, the Park District invited the community to a Park Planning Picnic on James Park grounds. This time more than 400 people participated in the planning process.

Now the Park District applied successfully for an Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) grant, an OSLAD (Open Space Lands Acquisition Development), and also found matching funds. The redevelopment process is underway.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Encouraging or enhancing the economic base of a community.

WINNER

City of Chicago, Department of Housing, for New Homes for Chicago.

The sheer scale and integrated nature of this program has transformed a collection of techniques that are used by other municipalities into a significant program for transforming a city.

PROBLEM: In the 1980s, Chicago witnessed a stagnating housing market and a growing shortage of affordable housing. Neighborhoods pockmarked by vacant lots and abandoned buildings could not attract private investment for redevelopment. Spiraling housing costs limited homeownership opportunities for low- and moderate-income households. Private developers needed direct subsidies for residential building in lower-income communities. And, at the same time, experts agreed on the importance of a mixed-income population base to promote neighborhood stability and support business development.

INNOVATION: Chicago’s Department of Housing (DOH) sought and found a mechanism to match homebuilders with the abundant vacant land in inner-city communities: The New Homes for Chicago program was launched in 1990. Vacant lots were bundled into clusters and sold for as little as $1 per lot. Fees for building permits and utility connections were waived or reduced. The City provided perimeter site improvements as needed and offered direct subsidies to both developers and low-income buyers. As a result, since 1990 over 1,000 owner-occupied housing units are in place on 60 sites across the city. In 2001, alone, developers initiated 11 new projects that will create almost 350 units upon completion.
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Encouraging or enhancing the economic base of a community.

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**WINNER**

Village of Round Lake Beach for its Meadowgreen Rehabilitation Program.

This is a creative public-private partnership to deal with the problem of a badly deteriorated condominium complex that had blighted the whole Village.

**PROBLEM:** In the Village of Round Lake Beach, the Meadowgreen Subdivision, a condominium community built in the late 1980's, severely deteriorated over its first ten years. Ownership shifted to a majority of absentee landlords who rented to a transient population. Its crime rate surged while its assessed evaluation fell. The subdivision's infrastructure was failing - street lights no longer worked; sewer lines partially collapsed. The housing structures, also, were falling apart. Because the subdivision was now a neighborhood eyesore, it was pulling down the value of adjacent properties.

**INNOVATION:** The Village of Round Lake Beach and the Meadowgreen Homeowners Association Board formed a public/private partnership to renovate the subdivision, raise property values, lower the crime rate and increase the number of owner-occupied units in the subdivision. TIF funding allowed the Village to assume responsibility for the subdivision's infrastructure. Today, almost two-thirds of the subdivision's structures have been renovated; resale prices have dramatically increased and owner-occupied units now outnumber rental units.
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Encouraging or enhancing the economic base of a community.

WINNER

Southwest Home Equity Assurance (Chicago) for its Home Equity Assurance Program (SWEAP).

Patterned on a program invented in Oak Park, SWEAP is the first large city neighborhood in the U.S. to obtain state legislation permitting it to tax itself to insure homeowners’ equity as a means of preventing blockbusting in the face of demographic changes.

PROBLEM: During the late 1970s and 1980s, Chicago’s southwest side neighborhoods suffered a decline in population and witnessed urban decay.

The effects of a shrinking middle-income population threatened both the city’s tax base and the city’s housing market. Negative perceptions about the viability of these neighborhoods emerged: They were seen as blighted areas unable to hold value over the long term. Unscrupulous realtors practiced blockbusting: Homeowners panicked and often sold their properties at a loss. Intervention was desperately needed to reverse this trend, to stop the cycle of decline before it endangered the stability of the city.

INNOVATION: Enter SWEAP, the Southwest Home Equity Assurance Program. In 1990, after fifteen years of grassroots lobbying by dedicated residents, the Illinois State Legislature empowered SWEAP. This program was implemented as a neighborhood stabilization tool. It is designed to build confidence in housing investment on Chicago’s southwest side by offering homeowners the opportunity to guarantee 100% of a home’s fair market value from decline caused by adverse neighborhood conditions.

Today, 60,000 homeowners fund the program, and its reserve fund exceeds $8 million. In 2000, the Home Improvement Loan Program was put in place. It is an extension of SWEAP’s original mission — to stabilize neighborhoods — and offers no- and low-interest home improvement loans.
Implementing programs that help governments meet the challenge of allocating scarce resources to deliver services and protect a community's financial health.

**WINNER**

City of Chicago, Office of Cable Communications, for Prosecuting Cable TV Signal Theft.

Cities lose untold revenue through cable TV signal theft every year; this program is a road map for combating it. This program takes pirate cable users out of the underground economy and boosts city revenues.

**PROBLEM:** Cable television signal theft is commonplace and detrimental to society on many levels: It adversely affects consumer service, government efficiency and credibility, law enforcement efforts and the cost of cable television subscriptions. City and industry experts agree that uncollected revenues due to theft in an estimated 100,000+ City of Chicago homes result in a minimum loss of $54 million annually.

**INNOVATION:** The City of Chicago and the area's principal franchised cable television companies have entered into a partnership program to prosecute residential and commercial cable television signal theft. To prosecute cable theft such a partnership is necessary as each partner has exclusive control of information essential to uncovering the crime. Further, this partnership affords regulator and regulated business a rare opportunity to work together toward a shared goal which is atypical of the often adversarial nature of the relationship.

The partnership is successful: To date fines assessed exceed $300K from commercials and 130K from residential. The City collects the fines; the cable industry signs on new subscribers, over a thousand since this program was put in place.
Implementing programs that help governments meet the challenge of allocating scarce resources to deliver services and protect a community’s financial health.

**WINNER**

New Trier Township for its Citizen Oversight Program.

Democracy assumes that citizens will be informed and watchful over how their money is spent; but, it takes a novel program like this to turn that ideal into a day-to-day reality.

**PROBLEM:** New Trier Township has a small budget which allows for a staff of only six full-time employees and three part-timers. Two of the full-time staff are social service professionals. At the same time, under State law, the Township is mandated to administer a wide range of social welfare programs. Since the Township could not allocate more of its budget to administration, there were unanswered questions about fiscal responsibility and oversight relative to social services grants.

**INNOVATION:** The Township sought volunteer help and set up four committees: Committee on Youth, Committee on Mental Health, Committee on Health and Human Services and Committee on Disabilities. Volunteer committee members are first interviewed by Township staff and are then assigned liaison posts with social service agencies for oversight. The committees meet monthly, present progress reports, review requests, suggest budgets and send their recommendations to the Township Board of Directors. Staff members step in to work with agencies or make recommendations to the Board of Directors when professional investigation is necessary.
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Establishing cooperative arrangements between groups of governments and/or government agencies to achieve common goals.

WINNER

Champaign County and Urbana Park District for their Community Service Work Program.

Many local governments use people sentenced to community service; but, Champaign County and the Urbana Park District have an unusually close relationship that maximizes the public benefit from such work.

PROBLEM: Champaign County needed staff supervisors for community service sentences. The Urbana Park District needed ways to stretch its budget and maintain its historic parks and excellent recreation services. The County had workers; the Park District had projects needing work.

INNOVATION: Champaign County and the Urbana Park District jointly funded a new position, Public Service Supervisor. The Supervisor manages the day-to-day work of community service crews under the guidance of the Champaign County Probation Department and the Urbana Park District Operations and Maintenance Department. Since the program’s inception, the Urbana Park District has saved thousands of dollars. This successful partnership was the first of many in Champaign County. Recently, the Supervisor expanded the community service program to include regular work for the Champaign County Housing Authority, the Champaign County Forest Preserve District and shelters for the homeless.
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Establishing cooperative arrangements between groups of governments and/or government agencies to achieve common goals.

WINNER

South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association, Chicago area, for developing a regional Geographic Information System (GIS) database.

Regional cooperation on a large scale is rare, and regional GIS databases are also rare; the two together are truly innovative.

PROBLEM: Chicago’s Southland, (the south and southwest suburban regions), experienced two decades of economic disinvestment. The Southland communities fiercely competed with their neighbors for facility investment and ignored cross-jurisdictional development and planning efforts. The area had no comprehensive marketing strategy.

INNOVATION: The South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association created the Chicago Southland Tomorrow Corridor Initiative (CSTCI). It is governed by a steering committee which represents over seventy municipalities. The CSTCI works to formalize regional transportation-oriented issues: The goal is one cohesive marketing strategy for the entire area primarily based on its transportation network. To this end, the organization is now completing a regional database, a Geographic Information System (GIS), and a framework for economic development. The next phase will focus on continued design and implementation of the regional database and corridor plans.
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Establishing cooperative arrangements between groups of governments and/or government agencies to achieve common goals.

WINNER

Village of Lake Zurich for its regional approach to beautification of U.S. Route 12 Corridor.

Typically, each community deals with highway beautification on its own turf; so, this project is exceptional for applying the idea of regional cooperation and using state-of-the-art techniques.

PROBLEM: U.S. Route 12 (Rand Road), the Village of Lake Zurich's principal commercial corridor, remained unimproved while the surrounding area quadrupled in population since 1960 and attracted very high-quality commercial, recreational and residential projects. The physical appearance of the highway corridor was no longer consistent with the changed character of the area. Also, as a gateway to southwestern Lake County, U.S. Route 12 lacked basic amenities such as appropriate signage.

INNOVATION: The Village of Lake Zurich petitioned the Lake County Department of Planning and the Northeast Illinois Planning Commission (NIPC) for help in coordinating a joint-municipal corridor planning process. Visual preference surveys were used to establish common ground on landscaping and signage issues. Consequently, the villages and cities along U.S. Route 12 worked cooperatively and accepted common guidelines for the corridor's redevelopment.
QUALITY OF LIFE

Achieving a demonstrable impact on community vitality through policy leadership by addressing issues or problems facing the community.

WINNER

Circuit Court of Cook County for its Children’s Advocacy Rooms.

Normally courtrooms are not hospitable to children who must accompany adult parties in lawsuits; but, the Circuit Court in Cook County welcomes children by providing them with special places as well as educational and entertaining activities.

PROBLEM: In Cook County hundreds of children a day pass through metal detectors on their way to the courts. Some come to court to participate in family legal proceedings as witnesses. Others come because their parents cannot provide appropriate child care. For children, the court experience can be extremely traumatic. In fact, twenty-five percent of these children come to court for domestic violence cases. The message is clear: children who come to court need a refuge from the devastating situations that bring them there. And, parents and court administrators need relief from the demanding tasks of ensuring the children’s safety and controlling the chaos caused by the presence of children.

INNOVATION: The Children’s Advocacy Rooms (CAR), free, onsite, drop-off child care for child witnesses and children of litigants, serve 20,000 children a year. The Rooms protect children who are at risk of being exposed to inappropriate testimony and/or behavior. The Rooms offer children a safe and nurturing environment. CAR also provides programs that enrich the lives of children: the arts education program is one example; the ‘Take Home a Book’ program is another. The Rooms offer information and referrals to social service agencies and keep a supply of donated children's clothing for those in need.
SERVICE DELIVERY

Innovative ways to deliver basic services.

WINNER

City of Chicago, Chicago Tax Assistance Center, for Mayor Daley’s Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) Program.

The EITC is one of the best programs for the working poor; but, a very high percentage of eligible taxpayers do not apply. Chicago’s program of providing outreach and application assistance through nonprofit organizations is a new way to overcome this problem and to channel federal money into lower income neighborhoods.

PROBLEM: According to the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, approximately 15% of U.S. households that are eligible for Federal Earned Income Tax Credits (EITC) fail to apply. The State of Illinois also has an EITC Program. In 1998, an estimated 250,000 families in Illinois failed to claim some $300 million owed to them under the Federal EITC. For Chicago, this translates into an economic loss. Many families do not apply for these credits because they do not know about them or cannot afford commercial tax preparation services. Some simply file their tax returns incorrectly.

INNOVATION: Now completing its third year, Mayor Daley’s EITC Program has twenty-one free and confidential tax preparation sites in the City. Two non-profits, The Center for Law and Human Services and The Tax Assistance Program, manage and staff these sites from the end of January through April 15. The City of Chicago conducts a major outreach campaign to inform the public about the program. The Mayor’s Chicago Tax Assistance Center (CTAC) also vigorously publicizes the service. The City of Chicago Treasurer, working with the CTAC, has attached a financial literacy outreach program to the EITC efforts. This program informs residents about costs of commercial tax preparation services and rapid refund anticipation loans (RALs).
SERVICE DELIVERY

Innovative ways to deliver basic services.

WINNER

Village of Downers Grove for its Community Survey.

Although community surveys are not new, Downers Grove conducts one annually and uses the results to evaluate programs and managers. It is a model that is studied internationally.

PROBLEM: The Village of Downers Grove has an extremely active and engaged citizenry who are accustomed to receiving quality services from their local government. However, the Village lacked the means to effectively evaluate its local service delivery. Was the citizenry satisfied? Was service quality improving or diminishing?

INNOVATION: Beginning in 1987, the Village of Downers Grove has conducted an annual Citizen Survey to better understand the needs, preferences and opinions of its residents. Survey questions are developed and updated based on input from Village staff – specifically, department directors. In 2001, one-third of Village households received surveys, and thirty-nine percent responded. Survey recipients are also provided with optional comment sheets so that they may express concerns or ask questions about Village services. Last year, 435 respondents commented and half requested replies. This collective input is a valuable resource for prioritizing municipal service delivery.

The 2001 Citizen Survey asked a total of sixty-eight questions covering the following topics: quality of life, quality of Village services, cable television, local participation, survey participation, resident input, Village Staff performance, public information, public safety, character counts!, community special events, demographic questions and computer usage.

The Citizen Survey has become an integral tool in the overall management of the Village of Downers Grove.
Honorable Mentions were given to entries in six categories:
citizen involvement, economic development, fiscal responsibility, intergovernmental cooperation, quality of life and service delivery.

They are excellent ‘best practice’ or ‘best in class’ examples of how to implement a program but not necessarily the first of their kind in Illinois or the United States.

CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

Involving citizens in the workings of government and programs.

HONORABLE MENTION

City of St. Charles for Focus on St. Charles.

Other governments use focus groups, but St. Charles represents a best practice by convening focus groups on a regular basis, with each being devoted to a particular topic, and then using results to modify programs and policies related to those topics.
**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Encouraging or enhancing the economic base of a community.

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**HONORABLE MENTION**

**Village of Algonquin for its Retail Marketing Strategy.**

A textbook case of retail development at the local level that other communities could profitably study.

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**FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY**

Implementing programs that help governments meet the challenge of allocating scarce resources to deliver services and protect a community’s financial health.

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**HONORABLE MENTION**

**Village of Skokie for its Electronic Board Packet.**

As electronic records become more common, local legislative bodies still rely on old-fashioned paper, but not Skokie, which saves money by eliminating paper even while giving every council member a laptop computer.
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Establishing cooperative arrangements between groups of governments and/or government agencies to achieve common goals.

HONORABLE MENTION

Clerk of the Circuit Court of Cook County for the Criminal Traffic Offense Reporting System.

Governments should share data but too often they do not. This project not only successfully promoted intergovernmental cooperation, but is notable for its capacity to save lives.

QUALITY OF LIFE

Achieving a demonstrable impact on community vitality through policy leadership by addressing issues or problems facing the community.

HONORABLE MENTION

The Chicago Transit Authority for its Bike-and-Ride Program.

Although the idea of taking bicycles on buses has been implemented elsewhere, it is rare in Illinois, and the CTAs provision of secure areas in rapid transit stations and on buses and trains marks this as a serious commitment to marrying two modes of transportation.
QUALITY OF LIFE

Achieving a demonstrable impact on community vitality through policy leadership by addressing issues or problems facing the community.

HONORABLE MENTION

Village of Merrionette Park for its Walking Path and Purple Martin Sanctuary.

By themselves, walking paths and bird sanctuaries are not new ideas, but this project shows that small size (2,000 residents) is no barrier to thinking big.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Innovative ways to deliver basic services.

HONORABLE MENTION

Arlington Heights Park District for On-Line Registration.

Outside of Illinois, governments deliver services on-line, but Arlington Heights Park District is among the very first in Illinois and is a model for others to follow.
Urban Innovation in Illinois seeks to identify innovative practices in local governments, to document and discuss them with local government officials, and to recognize noteworthy activities with Awards. Local government officials are invited to submit brief applications (three pages maximum; attachments may be included).

Awards will be made for innovative activities in the following areas:

- Citizen Involvement
- Economic Development
- Fiscal Responsibility
- Globalization
- Quality of Life
- Service Delivery

Each of these categories is divided into (1) governments 25,000 and over and (2) governments under 25,000. Based on past competitions, we expect to make about 20 awards. Applications may fall under two or more categories.

II. Who May Submit
Units of governments in Illinois (not including school districts). Other organizations, including associations of local governments, professional associations of local officials, consulting firms, banks, nonprofits.

III. Who Receives the Award?
Awards may be made to one of the above or shared by several partners that developed and refined a shared activity.

IV. Related Activities
A central Project concern is to help good ideas spread. Therefore, innovations will be summarized in brief reports, which will be given wide circulation. We hope participants will help prepare and present at professional meetings of local officials.

V. Judging Criteria
Potential for applicability and continued use in other governments, innovativeness and originality nationally, and in Illinois, improved service quality — better service degree of productivity improvement — increased service per dollar, creative implementation — such as winning support among potential opponents.

VI. Judges
The board of the Illinois Urban Innovation Project will select judges. The board includes representatives of major local government associations and professionals in related fields. The board will appoint judges from organizations such as: Illinois Association of Municipal Managers and Assistants, the Illinois City Management Association, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Community Affairs, the Illinois Government Finance Officers Association, the Illinois Municipal League, the Northwest Municipal Conference, the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus, and the South Suburban Mayors and Managers Association.

VII. Application Form
Below are the Subsections To Include with Suggested Approximate Line Lengths. The Total Maximum Length is Three Pages.

- Descriptive title (2 lines maximum)
- Description of problem that led to the innovation (20 lines max)
- Description of the innovation, including results and benefits, savings realized, distinguishing one-time and ongoing savings (30 lines max.)
- Assessment of potential use in other municipalities (10 lines max.)
- Approximate cost of the innovation and fiscal impact (5 lines max.) distinguishing one-time costs and ongoing costs; identify source of funding
Administrative and political feasibility—mobilizing support and overcoming potential resistance (20 lines max.) Genesis of the idea; names and titles of persons primarily responsible (inside or outside the municipal government; 5 lines max.).

Signature of chief administrative officer: “I certify that to the best of my knowledge the statements and calculations in this proposal are correct.” Signature, Printed Name, and Title.

Official preparing proposal and/or persons knowledgeable about it: “I am willing to help present this innovation to a professional meeting”. Signature, Name, Title, Address, and Phone.

Public affairs officer (contact person for media information): Name, Title, Address, and Phone.

VIII Application Procedure
Submit 10 copies single-spaced. Please include the specific subsections listed. You may submit two copies of supporting documentation.
Deadline: May 1, 2002.
Submit to:
Urban Innovation in Illinois
1126 E. 59th Street, Suite 322
The University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois 60637
773-702-8686 or 312-675-1679
or wbowman@depaul.edu

For further information contact any of the following individuals:
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JUDGES FOR THE 2002 URBAN INNOVATIONS IN ILLINOIS AWARDS PROGRAM

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Urban Innovation in Illinois grew out of the Fiscal Austerity and Urban Innovation (FAUI) Project. Founded in 1983, the FAUI Project has become the most extensive study of local government in the world. It includes surveys of mayors, council members, and administrators in 1,400 US municipalities; in 38 countries including most of Europe, and others from Argentina to Japan. Our secret is not massive central funding, but decentralization; some $18 million was raised largely by separate national teams following a common research design. Some 500 persons have participated--social scientists, policy advisors, local officials; as Coordinator, I edit three book series and a newsletter, drive the tour bus, and fix broken personal computers. We meet about three times a year in conferences, which often generate books; some 50 books and over 200 articles have been published to date.

To encourage innovation by local governments, the international project developed an Illinois counterpart, called Urban Innovation in Illinois. It was created in 1986 with a generous grant from the Joyce Foundation, but from outset depended far more on in-kind contributions than foundation money. We have worked with officials from the professional associations in Illinois that serve local governments: the Illinois Municipal League, Illinois City Management Association, Illinois Government Finance Officers Association (IGFOA), the regional municipal associations (Northwest, DuPage, South, etc.), The Civic Federation, and others. Everyone helped as they could. Some had mailing lists. Others had envelopes, but no stamps. We shared and things got done. Bill Morris chaired our Board, Bill Stafford, then Woods Bowman, led the awards program, Burt Diktowsky bought lunches, Norm Walzer did surveys. And so forth. A clear sign of the broad support for innovation is that when Joyce Foundation support ended, others continued the activities by sharing costs and resources. The Illinois GFOA and The Civic Federation played lead roles in the last two awards competitions. Others acknowledged in the Introduction have been active in this Sixth Competition.

How can we encourage innovation in Illinois? We have done many things, but the most visible activity is the Awards Program. In six successive competitions, we have made a total of some 80 awards to municipalities for innovation. Board members often present the mayor with a plaque at a city council meeting, where the press is present. Pictures thus appeared on the front of the local paper. A favorite for this was Bob Eppley, the wonderful retired City Manager who sang the ‘Star Spangled Banner’ and presented plaques with gusto. This indirectly rewarded the assistant city manager who may have come up with the idea, and the many staff critical to make it work. And this generated, for once, some good news about local government for the front page. Such encouragement helps the staff next time around.

The 80 awards are in five areas: creative contracting out, performance indicators, new forms of budgeting, coordination with other governments and cost of service measures (listed in Urban Innovation in Illinois 1989 and Clark 1994: chap. 8). What is most gratifying is to observe the continuous flow of new ideas and innovative practices. It makes one proud to work on local government in Illinois.

Terry Nichols Clark

References:
Fiscal Austerity and Urban Innovation Project website: www.src.uchicago.edu/depts/faui/archive.html Includes abstracts of the 50 books (in Newsletter#27) and related documentation.