

## 5. Myth: Townships contribute to overlapping government units.

### Response:

This is not true. Indiana law prohibits townships from duplicating services that other units of government provide. The Township Assistance Statute ensures that township responsibilities and services are distinct and not redundant.

## 6. Myth: Township government is corrupt.

### Response:

Corruption can occur at any level of government. However, the issue is not with the office itself but with the office holder. Townships have systems of accountability in place, and it is up to the individuals elected to uphold public trust. Most township officials work hard to serve their communities with integrity.

## 7. Myth: Township government is old-fashioned and not relevant.

### Response:

Townships are leading the way in bridging gaps in government services. They are creating innovative solutions like mergers, fire territories and collaborations. These partnerships and initiatives demonstrate that township governments are adaptable and highly relevant in addressing modern needs.

Example: Franklin, Needham and Union townships merged into FUN Township in Johnson County in 2021.

## 8. Myth: What about the Shepard-Kernan Report?

### Response:

The Shepard-Kernan Report is 15 years old and was not comprehensive study. It only provided recommendations, some of which suggested alternatives to township government. These recommendations have been reviewed and considered largely out-of-date. The 2023 IU Public Policy Study was an official project with the Indiana State Legislature designed to bring factual and actionable information to the Townships.

## 9. Myth: Township government should be consolidated at the county level.

### Response:

Townships serve a critical function that no other level of government provides—ensuring basic needs are met, such as preventing hunger, homelessness, and cold. As "second responders," township officials are directly involved in responding to emergencies in their communities, providing personalized assistance and maintaining essential services that help people in quiet, everyday crises. Consolidating these responsibilities to the county level could reduce responsiveness and create inefficiencies in addressing local needs.

This list aims to clarify common misconceptions about township government, highlighting the positive role they play in communities across the state.

# Myths About Township Government

## 1. Myth: Townships are not engaging in collaboration.

### Response:

This is false. Townships are actively collaborating through initiatives like Fire Territories. As of 2023, there are **66 Fire Territories** across the state that offer regional solutions for fire and emergency services, covering rural, suburban, and metro areas.

For example, Vernon Township's Fire Territory recently reduced fire insurance rates while adding Advanced Life Saving services.

## 2. Myth: Consolidating Fire Services will save money.

### Response:

Consolidation does not necessarily lead to savings. A 2020 study by the American Economics Group found that county-wide fire consolidations could lead to tax increases of up to 58%. Forced consolidation, like what HB1233 proposes, overlooks the significant work already done through regional collaborations. Fire and EMS services are highly localized needs—proximity is essential to saving lives. Centralization that moves services to a county seat could negatively impact response times, ultimately risking lives and property.

## 3. Myth: Townships are hoarding cash.

*\$600 Million  
in reserves?*

### Response:

This is inaccurate. Townships are allowed to build funds for future needs, similar to a “Rainy Day Fund.” These funds, such as Cumulative Fire, Equipment Replacement and Building Funds, help townships save for long-term projects rather than taking out loans. Townships are also responding to growing demands for fire and emergency services, as evidenced by increasing 911 call volumes across the state.

## 4 Myth: Townships are not accountable.

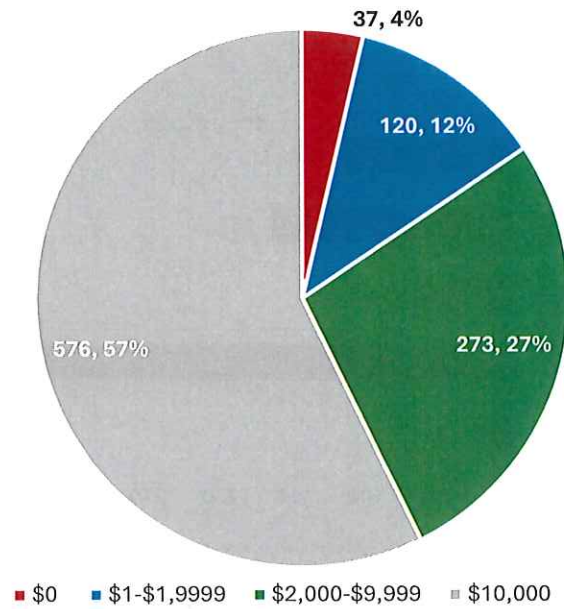
### Response:

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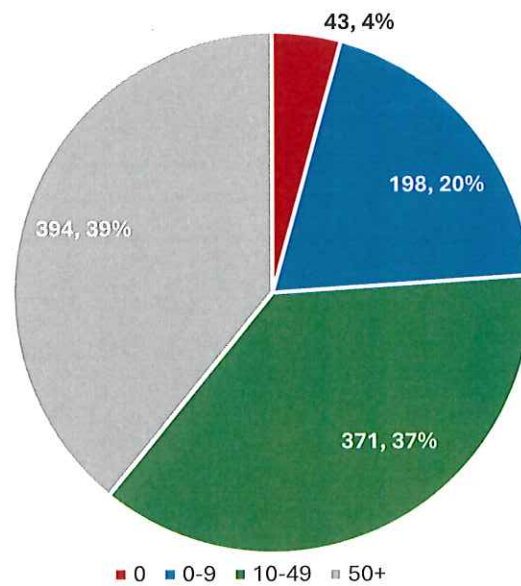
Townships provide direct accountability to the community. Elected trustees offer face-to-face assistance to individuals in need, particularly in times of crisis, like emergencies or poverty. Unlike bureaucratic systems with limited hours and less personal interaction, township officials can schedule with individuals at any time of day to ensure their needs are met. This approach not only offers immediate help but also seeks long-term solutions, empowering individuals to become self-sufficient. Moving assistance solely to county seats could strain social services and lead to greater social issues, including homelessness.

## 2025 ITA Legislative Conference

### Township Assistance Spending (2021-23)



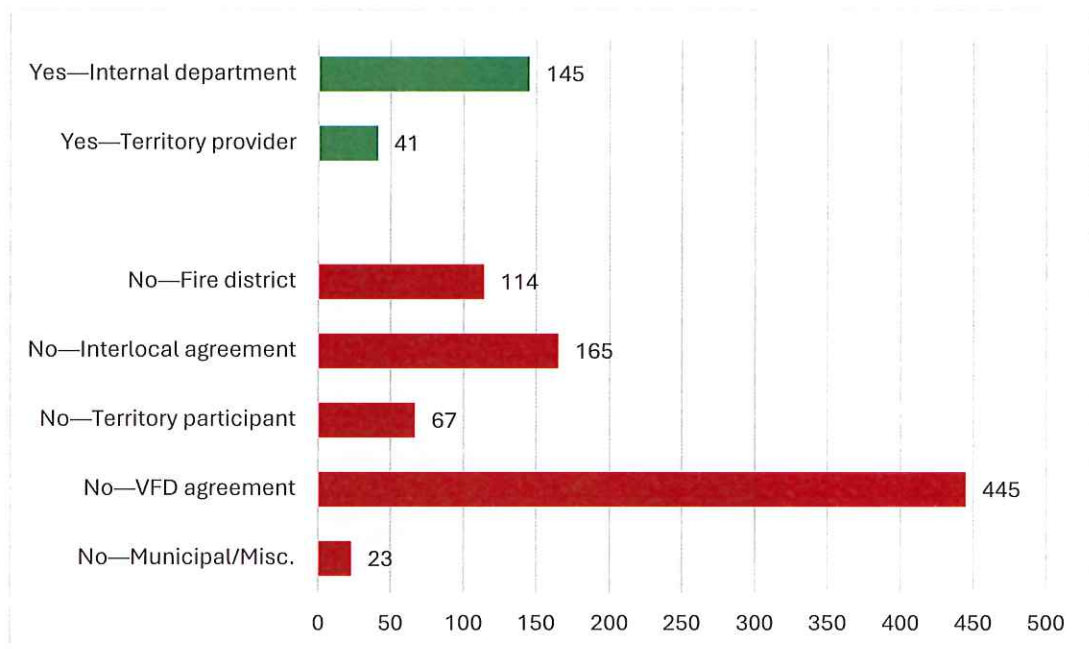
### Township Assistance Requests (2021-23)



Sources: 2021-23 Annual Financial Reports and AFR TA-7 Forms



### Township Fire Departments



Sources: 2022 ITA Trustee Survey; 2022 DLGF Inventories of Fire Districts and Fire Territories; 2023 Annual Financial Report