

**State to Give Towns \$238G to Study Shared Services
Neptune, Avon Among the 10 Municipalities**

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TRENTON — The state on Tuesday gave \$238,000 to 10 municipalities to help them study how to share local government services to try to cut property taxes.

New Jersey has the nation's highest property taxes, at an average of \$6,330 per homeowner, or twice the national number.

Some blame the state's multitude of municipalities. New Jersey has 566 towns, the most per square mile in the nation.

"Sharing services is an integral part of increasing government efficiency and a vital component of my administration's property tax reform plan," Gov. Corzine said. "By looking at consolidating services, these towns are showing a dedication to driving down costs and increasing government efficiency."

The grants will help:

Neptune City and Avon study joint dispatching services.

Fanwood and Scotch Plains study whether to create a joint library in a new shared facility.

North Plainfield, Watchung and Green Brook study possible shared firefighting and emergency medical services.

Tabernacle, Shamong and Medford Lakes study possible shared firefighting and emergency medical services.