

**TOWNSHIP REPORT FOR COMPLIANCE WITH DECENNIAL COMMITTEES ON LOCAL
GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY ACT
(For Townships and Road District JOINT REPORT Only)**

I. Unit of government submitting this report:

NAME OF TOWNSHIP: Edwardsville Township

Note: Any local government that levies a tax, other than a municipality or county must file this report. For Road Districts in counties with populations of less than 400,000 the highway commissioner may form a joint committee to prepare one combined report. See 50 ILCS 70/10(b-5).

II. Information about our Township

- A. We are located in Madison County. There are 23 townships in our county.
- B. The population of our Township is 40,598, as of the 2020 census.
- C. We have 2 full-time (Supervisor) employees, 1 full-time and 2 part-time (Park) employees, 3 full-time (Assessor) and 1 Part-time (Assessor) employees of the Township (not including elected officials).
- D. We have 4 employees and one part-time employee in our Road District (not including elected officials).
Our annual budget for 2024 is: \$1,634,605 (Supervisor) \$2,371,800 (Road District).
Our annual budget for 2023 is: \$3,235,714 (Supervisor) \$2,570,900 (Road District).
- E. Our Township's equalized assessed valuation for 2023 is ~~\$1,332,556,251~~ \$1,364,092,556 (as of ~~10/24/2023~~ 5/21/2024)

III. Information about Our Committee

A. Committee Members:

Township Supervisor: Kevin Hall
Township Highway Commissioner: Danny Picarella
Township Trustee: Sitso Nutsukpui
Township Trustee: Matt Chapman
Township Trustee: Kathie Duame
Township Trustee: Janet Haroian
Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment): Township Assessor Jennifer Hegel
Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment): Township Administrator Adam Colvin
Township Resident (Supervisor Appointment): Sara Berkbigler
Township Resident (Highway Comm. Appointment): Kenny Brockmeier (Deceased), replaced by Gabriel Kerr.

Note: Per 50 ILCS 70/10(b), the committee membership must include all the elected or appointed members of the township board (Supervisor and Trustees) and two residents appointed by the Supervisor. The residents can be the Assessor, Clerk or Collector, if you have one, or other residents of the Township, but these officials are not required to be on this Committee. The Supervisor may appoint more than two residents if deemed appropriate.

B. Dates that our Committee Met (50 ILCS 70/20)

First (Organizational) Meeting

(must occur prior to June 10, 2023):	5/24/2023
Second Meeting:	7/16/2024
Third Meeting:	10/15/2024

**EACH OF THESE SECTIONS ARE TO BE COMPLETED SEPARATELY BY THE
ROAD DISTRICT AND THE TOWNSHIP AND INCLUDED AS TWO PARTS OF THE
SUBMITTED REPORT**

IV. Programs Offered by our Township.

Edwardsville Township Offers the Following Services and Programs:

A. Supervisor's Office

1. General/Emergency Assistance
 - a. The Township **aids** individuals requiring temporary financial assistance. General Assistance (GA) is for residents who do not receive federal or state welfare benefits. Emergency Assistance (EA) is for residents who are not eligible for GA, not receiving any other federal or state welfare benefits, and have an urgent, life-threatening need.
2. LIHEAP
 - a. The Illinois Home Energy Assistance Program provides a one-time benefit to eligible low-income households for energy bills.
3. Annual Community Touch-a-Truck Event
 - a. The Township hosts an annual Touch-a-Truck Event for attendees to interact with unique vehicles inaccessible to the average person.
4. Lunch-and-Learn
 - a. The Township sponsors seasonal **Lunch-and- Learns**, inviting guest speakers from various careers to discuss important topics affecting residents.
5. MCT Bus Passes
 - a. Per ACT/MCT grants, the Township provides free, no-cost bus passes to residents.
6. Benefit Access
 - a. The Benefit Access Program offers two benefits for seniors and persons with disabilities. A license plate fee discount and free rides on fixed-route transit systems.
7. Free Child Diapers and Wipes Program
 - a. Free diapers and wipes for Edwardsville Township residents with a valid ID confirming residency in the Township.
8. Free Mask Program
 - a. Free masks for Edwardsville Township residents with a valid ID confirming residency.
9. Senior Health Insurance Program Counseling
 - a. Free counseling service that provides one-on-one assistance to Medicare recipients and their beneficiaries.
10. Senior Farmers' Market (Seasonal)
 - a. Vouchers available for income-qualifying seniors 60 and older.
11. Narcan Distribution
 - a. Distribution free of charge to any persons needing help with Opioid addiction.
12. Thanksgiving Baskets
 - a. We provide 30 Thanksgiving baskets to families in need each year to families with children in the Edwardsville School District.

B. Robert C. Stille Edwardsville Township Community Park

This park is located in the heart of the Township. The first clearing began for the park in April 1977, and the first phase was formally dedicated on July 13, 1980. With grant funds from the State of Illinois and the United States Land and Water Conservation program, Edwardsville Township acquired 27.45 acres of land, which was named Edwardsville Township Park. The park project was undertaken following community support from various civic organizations and other groups and with the leadership of then Supervisor Robert Stille.

This park offers Township residents the opportunity to enjoy recreational opportunities at its finest. Over the years, through public/private/grant opportunities, we have installed a boundless playground for individuals of all ages and sensory abilities. We renovated the Rotary playground and installed state of the art materials that are much more wear and weather friendly. We also renovated a smaller playground near the entrance. We resurfaced the tennis courts, laid pickleball lines, and recently replaced all nets. We installed a solar array and vehicle charger that provides free Level 2 electric vehicle charging to park guests. In the early 1990's we were loaned the U.S. Navy A7E Corsair airplane. In the mid 2010's we successfully finished a fundraising campaign to purchase and install a new vinyl wrap. Every other year we document our care to the Naval Museum in Florida that we have been taking great care of the airplane. This park gets its nickname Airplane Park from this commonly known landmark. This park includes 8 picnic shelters, 3 restrooms, a maintenance shed, the Susan Ann Youth Memorial and Fountain feature memorializing youth ~~you~~ who passed away before the age of 25. We installed a walking gate from the MCT Nickel Plate Trail for easy access. There is also a 1.5-mile walking loop at the rear of the park for guests to enjoy interconnected walking trails. Through the help of private donations, we expanded Pavilion 6. In the mid 2010's, we added a dedicated swing to those individuals with wheelchairs. This was a Make-A-Wish project and was also funded through the Edwardsville Community Foundation. The Township Community Park has been home to several Boy Scouts of America Eagle Scout projects: Trail Walking loop, Gaga Ball Pit, Bicycle repair station.

Current and future planned park improvements include the addition of a drinking fountain at the walking gate, solar panels on the maintenance shed, solar panels on Pavilion 7 to better offset electric vehicle charging use. An asphalt trail connection at the rear of the park that joins the parking lot with the walking trail.

Due to the **growth** and rapid expansion of the Township over the years, this park is a very popular place for Township residents. Residents enjoy family reunions, graduation parties, birthday parties, Community Events, fundraisers, etc. This park is also home to the Metro East Lutheran Tennis Team who practices and competes on our courts.

C. Assessor's Office

1. Assesses property in Edwardsville, Glen Carbon and some Unincorporated Areas
2. Answers questions, discuss concerns, and guides homeowners through the property tax process
3. Help homeowners with exemptions that they may be entitled to
4. General Homestead Exemptions
 - a. \$6,000 reduction to property assessment for those who own and live in their home on January 1st of the current year.
5. Senior Citizens Homestead Exemption
 - a. \$5,000 reduction of assessment for those 65 years and older who own and live in their home.
6. Low Income Senior Citizens Assessment Freeze
 - a. Assessment is frozen for those 65 years and older who own and live in their home and make \$65,000 or less a year.
7. Disabled Persons' Homestead Exemption
 - a. \$2,000 reduction to property assessment for 100% disabled homeowners
8. Returning Veterans Homestead Exemption
 - a. One time reduction in assessment of \$5,000 for any veteran who returned from active duty in an armed conflict involving United States Armed Forces. Must be filed upon returning home.
9. Disabled Veterans Homestead Exemption
 - a. Reduction in assessment for veterans with service-related disabilities. Amount varies on the percentage of disability.
10. Homestead Improvement Exemption
 - a. Four-year reduction to assessment based on recent increase in value from improvement to property like remodel or addition.

D. Renovation of Township Hall (moved after assessor)

The original building was erected in 1988, building renovation discussions started in 2014, after several administrations, ground was broken to start the renovation in December 2022. This renovation was focused on ADA Compliance and an addition of over 2,000 Square feet to better address the needs of the residents of the Township. Other additions as part of the total project are an electric vehicle charger to provide green energy to Township residents and in the coming month solar panels will completely offset the usage of the building and charger.

V. Social Service Agreements

A. We partner with the following not for profits to offer social services (list all):

<u>Entity:</u>	<u>Services Provided:</u>
Glen-Ed Food Pantry	Supplies for back to school
Brown Bag Buddies	Serving Area Kids Lunches during summer
Overnight Warming Location	Equipment to serve local homeless
Edwardsville Rotary	Criterion Race Public Sponsor, helmets and other free bicycle supplies
Edwardsville USTA Futures Tennis Tournament	Admission for Residents for pro sport
City of Edwardsville	Fireworks Celebration
Goshen Market	Access to fresh food
Edwardsville Art Fair	Community Art Programs
Man Street Community Center	Meals on Wheels

Our residents have benefitted from these agreements in the following ways:

B. We have considered possibly offering the following social services or the following additional potential partnerships:

VI. Awards and Recognitions

Our Township has received the following awards, distinctions, and recognitions: (List all).

2018 Governor's Hometown Award – Kelan's Swing
2014 Governor's Hometown Award – Boundless Playground

VII. Intergovernmental Agreements

A. We partner with, or have Intergovernmental Agreements, with the following other Governments (List all):

<u>Entity:</u>	<u>Services Offered:</u>
Edwardsville Township Road & Bridge	Sharing of Full Time Employee
Village of Glen Carbon	Use of monthly board meetings in Council Chambers
City of Edwardsville	Fireworks for 4th of July 2023

- B. Our Township's efficiency has increased through intergovernmental cooperation in the following way:

Edwardsville Township has used intergovernmental agreements to save taxpayer resources and avoid duplicating services.

VIII. Review of Laws, Township Policies, Township Rules and Procedures, Township Training Materials, and other Documents

We have reviewed the following, non-exhaustive list of laws, policies, training materials, and other documents applicable to the Township to evaluate our compliance and to determine if any of the foregoing should be amended.

- _____ State laws applicable to Townships, including, but not limited to the Township Code (60 ILCS)
- _____ Illinois Open Meetings Act (5 ILCS 120)
- _____ Policy on public comment
- _____ Designation of OMA officer (5 ILCS 120/1.05(a))
- _____ All of Elected Officials have completed OMA Training (5 ILCS 120/1.05(b))
- _____ Schedule of All Township Regular Meetings for Calendar or Fiscal Year (5 ILCS 120/2.03)
- _____ Illinois Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140)
- _____ Designation of FOIA officer (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- _____ FOIA Officer Training (5 ILCS 140/3.5(b))
- _____ Computation and Retention of FOIA Requests (5 ILCS 140/3.5(a))
- _____ Posting Other Required FOIA Information (5 ILCS 140/4(a); 5 ILCS 140/4(b))
- _____ List of Types or Categories of FOIA Records under Township's Control (5 ILCS 140/5)
- _____ Periodic Meetings to Review Closed Meeting Minutes (5 ILCS 120/2.06(d))
- _____ IMRF Total Compensation Postings (5 ILCS 120/7.3)
- _____ Designation of Whistleblower Auditing Official (50 ILCS 105/4.1)
- _____ All of our Elected Officials have filed statement of economic interests (5 ILCS 420/4A-101; 5 ILCS 420/4A-101.5)
- _____ Sexual harassment prevention training (775 ILCS 5/2-109(c))
- _____ Our Intergovernmental Agreements

_____ Our Social Service Agreements or Contracts

_____ Our budget and financial documents

_____ State Ethics Laws, including, but not limited to the State Officials and Employees Ethics Act (5 ILCS 430/1-1)

_____ Our budget and financial documents

_____ Reports on government efficiency, including “Local Government Efficiency and Size in Illinois: Counting Tax Revenues, Not Governments” by Wendell Cox (2016); “Local Democracy and Townships in the Chicagoland Area,” by Wendell Cox, (January 2012).

Local Government in Illinois: A Comparison of Township Government by Wendell Cox (2024)

- IX. What Have We Done Well? (List any budget/levy freezes or reductions in the past decade; list new programs or services offered to residents over the past decade; list any ethics ordinances adopted; timely FOIA compliance; responsiveness to public; list any new intergovernmental agreements or social services offered; list any increase in number of township residents served, etc.)

The Township for many years has focused on finding areas and providing needed value to our community. Forty years ago, ~~this was with the creation of~~ **we established** Township Park for the community. The past few years, the focus has been to help those struggling in our community while continuing many of our previous programs.

The Township has noticed ~~in a county of the size of Madison, that people and groups are~~ **that there are people & groups in Madison County that are** falling through the cracks. To address this, we have worked to increase or **to** start support for the following areas: child, adult, and senior food insecurity, infant diapers and formula, homeless, transit access, and environmental programs.

Budgets over the last 10 years

2014-2015	\$904,990
2015-2016	\$1,102,469
2016-2017	\$940,010
2017-2018	\$917,010
2018-2019	\$917,010
2019-2020	\$1,074,410
2020-2021	\$2,579,960
2021-2022	\$2,487,340
2022-2023	\$2,948,540
2023-2024	\$3,235,714
2024-2025	\$1,634,605

*Over the last 10 years Edwardsville Township’s budget has had minimal increases. From 2020 until now, we increased the budget to account for receiving the loan for the renovation for Township Hall.

Town Levy over the last 10 years

2013	\$639,498
2014	\$628,500
2015	\$622,500
2016	\$597,500
2017	\$627,700
2018	\$818,700
2019	\$853,500
2020	\$886,322
2021	\$904,000
2022	\$931,000
2023	\$955,000

New Social Service Programs Offered

Mainstreet Community Center	02/2014
Township Park used by Egyptian Radio Club	04/2014
Edwardsville Arts Center	08/2014
American Legion (provide wrapping paper)	10/2014
Edwardsville Rotary	02/2015
Municipal Aggregation option	02/2015
Flight Deck Veteran's group	10/2016
(airplane park restoration)	
Edwardsville USTA Futures	07/2017
Kelan's Wheelchair Accessible Swing	04/2018
Goshen Market Foundation	05/2021
Glen Ed Pantry (Back to school event)	07/2023
Overnight Warming Location	12/2023
Brown Bag Buddies	03/2024

Playgrounds Created/Renovated

Edwardsville Rotary Playground	1991 then 09/22/2013
Junior Service Club	04/01/2013
Mabel's Playground	05/2019 renovated

Township Policies Adopted

FOIA Policy	11/2013
Personnel Policy	01/2014
By-Laws & Procedures	02/2014
Accounts Payable Policy	03/2014
Capital Asset Policy	03/2014
Credit Card Policy & Procedures	03/2014
Financial Reserve Policy	03/2014
Investment Policy	03/2014
Tree Dedication Policy	04/2014

Social Media Policy	04/2016
ADA Transition Policy	05/2016 revised 3/2019
ADA Grievance Policy	05/2016
Purchase Policy	09/2016

- a. Edwardsville Township continues to be a stopgap for the local community. To address this need, years ago, Edwardsville Township created the social services safety net, which continues to today. This grouping of organizations is comprised of non-profits, religious organizations, and other municipalities. Township residents continue to benefit from a variety of local services. We are the closest form of government assistance to our residents who cannot get assistance at either the State, County or City level.

Our residents benefit from lunch and learn professional development opportunities, recreational opportunities at our park, energy assistance, license plate discount, farmer's market coupons, etc. Edwardsville Township is extremely cautious in our spending (only raised budgets 2-4% each year in the past 10 years) and what we cannot afford, we apply for strategic grants that will help our residents and community at large. We have responded to every FOIA request (56 requests received over 10 years) timely with all records we were authorized to provide. Over the last 10 years we have passed policies regarding social media, by-laws procedures, FOIA, ADA Transition & ADA Grievance policy, Tree dedication policy, Personnel handbook, Accounts payable policy, Capital Asset Policy, Credit Card policy, Financial Reserve policy, Investment policy and purchase policy. Edwardsville Township continues to be advised by our Township attorney and is a proud member of Townships of Illinois for over 40 years.

Over the last 10 years Edwardsville Township has helped 1,250 residents under the Benefit Access program. We have assisted 369 Senior Health Insurance Program clients. We have helped 3,643 clients in the Low Income Heating and Energy Program.

X. What Inefficiencies Did We Identify/What Are our Next Steps?

For years, the Township was squeezed into too small of an office space that could not provide needed services to the community and was not ADA compliant. This inefficiency has been addressed since moving into our renovated office the past 10 months.

One area for improvement is increasing the number of intergovernmental agreements the Township has. Between the City of Edwardsville, Village of Glen Carbon, Glen Carbon Library, surrounding Townships, School District, SIUE, Madison County, and state of Illinois, we feel we could increase our services by partnering with some of these organizations. Next step to address this is both building relationships and identifying areas of need in the community.

XI. What Can We Do Better or More Efficiently?

One area that can always use improvement for Edwardsville Township is educating the public about the difference between Edwardsville Township and the City of Edwardsville.

Edwardsville Township could benefit from better communication with its residents. Although we publish various press releases throughout the year letting residents know our progress, we want Township residents to know what we do, why we do it, and how

we can make things even better. Social media and website are additional resources that can be used for communication and need to be considered if they are being used in the best way.

XII. Studies on Governmental Efficiencies

In preparing this report, we reviewed several studies on local government efficiency. These studies show that:

- The average local government in Illinois serves 1800 residents compared to the national median of 2850 individuals
- Most townships in Illinois have no bonded indebtedness. Together with road districts they are an integral element of local democracy. Township expenditures have grown at a lower rate than those of any other level of government since 1992.
- Townships have lower labor costs and employ mostly part time employees.

XIII. Our committee's recommendations regarding Increased Accountability and Efficiency:

Edwardsville Township is a vital part of the Madison County community. We strive every day to make the community better for our citizens. Much of this focus is on those in need from seniors to youth or individuals going through a tough time.

To increase accountability, we believe we should continue live streaming our monthly meetings and continue to expand our accountability center portion of our website.

Some other recommendations provided by committee members:

- Grant log for additional transparency of funds
- Spend more resources on the website
- Explore merging with a neighboring Township which would increase efficiency by saving taxpayer money and increase Road mileage

As an Edwardsville Township Decennial Committee, we understand that Illinois has more units of government than any other state in the country and Townships are a large focus as an option to shrink that number. As we know how vital Township services are and the toll it would take to remove it, our recommendation would be to merge some Townships together.

For Edwardsville Township, the most logical partner would be to merge with Pin Oak Township which is directly to the east of us. The City of Edwardsville and Village of Glen Carbon that combine for much of Edwardsville Township, every year are growing more and more to the east and further into Pin Oak Township. By merging Edwardsville and Pin Oak Townships, it would save the taxpayers a set of elected officials, increase efficiency of both communication and cooperation between governments along with avoiding confusion of where the Township line is, all of this while continuing to offer all of the same programs.

The Edwardsville Township Decennial Committee feels this report lays out the many great services and benefits offered by Edwardsville Township to our citizens. We think it has been a worthwhile exercise to see where we can improve our efficiency in both day to day and big picture programs as we work to be good stewards of our taxpayers dollars.

Note: This Report must be filed with your County no later than 18 months after your first committee meeting.

Submitted by: _____
Chairman, Decennial Efficiency Committee of _____ Township

Date: _____