CSG, the multi-branch organization of the states and U.S. territories, champions excellence in state government, working with state leaders across the nation and through its regions to put the best ideas and solutions into practice.

To this end, CSG:

- Builds leadership skills to improve decision-making;
- Advocates multistate problem-solving and partnerships;
- Interprets changing national and international conditions to prepare states for the future; and,
- Promotes the sovereignty of the states and their role in the American federal system.

Innovations, solutions, leadership, cooperation: CSG is the hub and voice of state government, directed by elected officials dedicated to excellence.

CSG is a nonpartisan organization that fosters excellence in state government. Based on the proposition that the states are the best source for insight and innovation, CSG identifies and disseminates innovative solutions to common concerns across the states.

Founded in the 1930s by Colorado Sen. Henry Toll, CSG has served the three branches of state government for most of the 20th century through leadership education, research and information services. The Council’s unique structure features four regional offices that focus on the needs, special concerns and opportunities of states in the East, South, Midwest and West. In addition, CSG maintains an office in the nation’s capital to monitor federal government activities and their impact on state issues and programs.

CSG’s headquarters office in Lexington, Ky., hosts numerous national associations that serve state constitutional officers and other officials. In addition, the national office houses services such as the States Information Center that provide information and publications to state government officials across the country.

The combined assets of a national network built on a regional structure, funded primarily by state government dues, enables CSG to play a dynamic role in strengthening state government.

As it has for six decades, today CSG provides state officials with the tools and strategies they need to implement effective policies and programs. The Council serves as a catalyst for state leadership, building new partnerships within government and among governing entities, promoting multistate, regional and international ventures and establishing vital links with the private sector and other civic leaders.
Advancing the Mission: Key CSG Products and Services

Innovations

State Innovations Briefs. Revised — innovatively — from a format established more than 20 years ago, this long-standing series focuses on innovative state programs selected by state officials from CSG’s four regions for their creative approaches to significant problems common to most states.

“New times bring new needs in government, as in other affairs”

— Henry Toll

State Government News. For almost 40 years, this monthly magazine has reported on state developments, issues and innovations. It is distributed to all state legislators and thousands of other state officials.

State Trends and Forecasts. These reports offer policy options for critical issues. Detailed information gathered through 50-state surveys form the context for deliberations of recognized experts reported in these tri-annual reports.

State Trends Bulletin. Keeping state officials abreast of the latest trends in issues, policies and legislation, these timely reports provide quick access to crucial information.

Solutions

The States Information Center. The SIC inquiry service provides quick, reliable and confidential inquiry and reference services on state issues. The center’s library houses more than 20,000 state legislative, executive and judicial branch documents available on 30-day loan.

Suggested State Legislation. Published annually since 1940 when it began as “suggested war legislation,” this volume contains legislation on current important issues selected by CSG’s Committee on Suggested State Legislation.

Spectrum: The Journal of State Government. Presently in its 69th volume, this journal provides a forum for discussing state issues from political, scholarly and practitioner perspectives. A highly respected journal, Spectrum bridges the gap between scholarly researchers and state officials.

Leadership

Toll Fellows. Each year, for the past decade, 35 emerging leaders from across the country have gathered in Kentucky for the Henry Toll Fellowship program, an intensive five-day leadership development program. To develop the next generation of leaders from all branches of state government, the program provides information and perspective not available in the course of everyday public service.

Leaders from the Regions. The Bowhay Institute for Legislative Leadership Development, sponsored by CSG’s Midwestern Legislative Conference, provides a week of policy workshops and leadership development for 33 lawmakers each summer. The Southern Legislative Conference sponsors attendance at the Center for Creative Leadership. In the East, state officials take advantage of the Yankee Trader Institute, and legislators in the West reap benefits from the ongoing WESTRENDS project of CSG’s Western office.

Public Integrity Annual. Published in cooperation with the American Society for Public Administration, this volume is a resource for anyone concerned with the fundamental questions of integrity in American democracy. With a ready reference to state campaign finance, lobbying and ethics regulations plus more than a dozen peer-reviewed articles, essays and book reviews covering a broad range of issues, PIA shows how ethics empowers individuals and organizations to find and prevent problems.
Cooperation

CSG Networks. Conferences sponsored by CSG’s regional offices, affiliate groups or the headquarters operation, bring state officials together and remain a cornerstone service of the organization. The multiple networking opportunities provided through regional and national conferences serve as the principle means of disseminating the working notes from the laboratories of democracy.

International programs. States are major players in the global marketplace, and CSG’s growing presence there provides key opportunities for state officials to further their expertise in that arena. Seminars, technical assistance programs and citizen exchange are all part of CSG’s international program, coordinated through the standing International Committee, which supports the expanding role of the states in international trade, economic development and other global activities.

Interstate Consulting Service. This CSG service pools the expertise and talents of officials from several states to help an individual state address important management or implementation issues.

These are just of few of the hundreds of products and services provided by CSG as it continues to pursue the vision of Henry Toll. As Toll well knew, the role of the states in the federal system is critical. As stewards of the great cultural, social and economic diversity of the nation, states are constantly on the cutting edge of policy and program development. Through the Council’s many activities, including leadership training, research and information products and regional problem-solving, CSG sparks innovation and effectiveness in state governments. Innovations, solutions, leadership, cooperation: CSG.

Henry Toll: The Founder’s Vision

Henry Walcott Toll, founding father of The Council of State Governments, was a tireless visionary, an innovative champion of state government, a courageous opponent of racism, a spirited statesman — in other words, a leader.

The parochial narrow-mindedness of many of his colleagues led Toll to look beyond Colorado’s borders and study other legislatures. Out of his research was born the dream of The Council of State Governments.

Through his tireless drive, the Council grew from a fledgling association of a handful of lawmakers to a nationwide network of state officials. He served as the Council’s first executive director through 1938, and served as the organization’s honorary president until his death in 1975.

Henry Wolcott Toll serves today as a model for state leaders: visionary, innovative, courageous. His vision remains the driving force behind the organization he founded as it prepares to lead the states into the 21st century.

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THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS
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Clearinghouse on Licensure, Enforcement and Regulation
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National Association of State Boating Law Administrators
National Association of State Election Directors
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National Emergency Management Association
National Association of State Facilities Administrators
National Association of State Personnel Executives
National Association of State Treasurers
National Association of State Telecommunications Directors
National Conference of Lieutenant Governors

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