

IX. Benefits

The GIS Data Sharing Coordination Program was designed to overcome barriers to GIS information sharing and provide a wide array of benefits to participants, as follows:

Catalog of existing data sets:

It is becoming increasingly easy for government agencies, citizens and commercial entities to determine what GIS data sets are available and who is the primary custodian by visiting the Metadata Repository on the GIS Clearinghouse. The Coordinating Body has set goals for 1999 to develop and post metadata for 50% of all state agencies and 25% of all local governments. The GIS Clearinghouse allows easy searching for data sets of interest, thereby minimizing missed opportunities to use existing data sets.

Clarity about data ownership

Each data set has a designated Primary Custodian, the agency which originated the data and remains responsible for its quality.

Improved data quality

As use of Cooperative members' data sets increases, users are passing updates, corrections, and revisions back to the Primary Custodians. The result is increasing data quality. All cooperative members, as well as the public and private sector users of the data, benefit from these improvements in data quality.

Standards and consistent practices

The use of a standardized data sharing agreement makes the rules for sharing within the Cooperative consistent. All members of the Cooperative agree to comply over time with standards for metadata, data exchange formats, and other characteristics.

Savings

Cooperative members have access to all other members' data sets at no cost. Therefore, duplication of effort and investment in creating data sets already available from other agencies are minimized.

Community building

The Coordination Program and the Clearinghouse encourage members of the GIS community to share information about their projects, education programs, conferences, and experiences. The Work Groups and Committees provide a venue for long-lasting professional relationships built around common interests and mutual goals.

National presence

The emergence of the NYS GIS Coordination Program has made it possible for New York to participate actively in national efforts to create and promote a national spatial data infrastructure. It has allowed New York to apply for and receive federal funds to enhance the program and created opportunities to work with and learn from other states on issues of mutual concern.
