The Ford School of Public Policy’s Applied Policy Seminar (APS) is a semester-long course offered to students in the Ford School’s Master’s of Public Policy Program. The course provides an opportunity for students to conduct a public sector consulting project for state and local governments and community development organizations in Ann Arbor, Detroit, and other areas of Michigan. Each year, topics for student projects are jointly developed by the course’s faculty director and staff at the client organization. Projects range widely in policy area, methodology, size, and complexity. All projects culminate in the production of a final report and an oral presentation to the client.

Student participants in the Fall 2008 Applied Policy Seminar will work on a single project, under the co-direction of Professor Elisabeth Gerber and Washtenaw County Administrator Robert Guenzel. The project’s client will be the Washtenaw County Administration. The project will analyze various options, opportunities and challenges to reorganizing County service delivery in several service areas. Details of the proposal, including specific research questions, scope, and deliverables, will be developed over the next several weeks in consultation and collaboration with the clients. Some preliminary ideas follow below.

**Goals:** the project will provide the client with information and resources about various modes of service delivery, including models for sharing services between county and local governments. Specific research topics and questions will be developed jointly with the project clients. These may include: review of academic and applied research on collaborative service delivery; basic information about the legal options available to Washtenaw County and partner governments for forming joint service delivery arrangements in Michigan; identification of alternate legal options for joint service delivery in other states; analysis of existing uses of various service delivery models in Michigan and elsewhere; assessment of the perceived opportunities and challenges, and the likely benefits and costs, of joint service delivery for several service areas; and evaluation of the various options available.

**Scope:** approximately 20 students will participate, under the co-direction of Professor Elisabeth Gerber and Washtenaw County Administrator Robert Guenzel. Each student should register for a 3-credit course (PP578) and should plan to devote approximately 10 hours per week to the project, on average, over the course of the semester. Decisions about specific research questions, to be made jointly between Professor Gerber, Administrator Guenzel, the students, and the clients, will determine the scope of the overall project.
Methodology: methodologies will depend on the specific questions studied. They may include literature reviews, archival research, legal analysis, case studies, email/telephone/face-to-face interviews, analysis of census data, budget modeling and SWOT analysis.

Timeframe: the project timeframe will coincide with the University of Michigan’s Winter Semester, beginning roughly Friday January 11 and ending roughly Friday April 11, 2008.

Products: the students will produce a written report that documents their research methods and findings. Length and complexity will be largely determined by the specific research questions asked. Students will also make a final oral presentation to clients.