Ronnie L. Korosec
University of Central Florida
Evan M. Berman
Louisiana State University

Technology, Communication, Collaboration

Municipal Support for Social Entrepreneurship

Ronnie L. Korosec is an assistant professor in the Department of Public Administration at the University of Central Florida. Her research focuses on local government in the areas of public policy, contracting and procurement, and innovation in government. She has published in the *Public Performance and Management Review, Policy Studies Journal*, and other journals of the discipline.
E-mail: rkorosec@mail.ucf.edu.

Evan M. Berman is a professor in the College of Business Administration, Public Administration Institute at Louisiana State University,. He is managing editor of *Public Performance and Management Review.* His recent books include *Performance and Productivity in Public and Nonprofit Organizations,* (M. E. Sharpe, 2006, 2nd edition), *Human Resource Management in Public Service* (Sage, 2005), *The Professional Edge* (M. E. Sharpe, 2004), and *Essential Statistics for Public Managers and Policy Analysts* (CQ Press, 2002, 2006, 2nd edition, forthcoming).
E-mail: berman@lsu.edu.

This study examines how cities help social entrepreneurship—the activity of private individuals and organizations taking initiative to address social challenges in their communities. Based on a national survey and in-depth interviews among jurisdictions with populations over 50,000, the authors find that municipalities help social entrepreneurs by increasing awareness of social problems, and by helping them to acquire resources, coordinate with other organizations, and implement programs. Nearly three-quarters of cities provide active or moderate support, which is positively associated with the perceived effectiveness of nonprofit organizations in their communities.

Municipal government support for social entrepreneurship is increasingly discussed as an approach for strengthening communities. Social entrepreneurship (sometimes also called *civic entrepreneurship*) involves private individuals and organizations taking the initiative to address social challenges in their communities (Leadbetter 1997; Osborne and Gaebler 1992; Timmons 1989; Young 1997). Such efforts often involve the development of new programs and services that bring counseling, awareness, support, and other activities for confronting such issues as teenage truancy, substance abuse, public health, environmental protection, and public safety. Some of these initiatives have received widespread recognition and are cost-effective as well, such as peer mentoring programs used to reduce teenage pregnancy. Social entrepreneurship often involves nonprofit organizations and individuals with long-standing ties to the community (Catford 1998; McPherson n.d.). The lack of energetic private initiatives is frequently regarded as a hallmark of community stagnation, as well as a barrier to public sector effectiveness (Boris and Steuerel 1999; Cannon 2000; Peters 1997; Vaillancourt 2000). Thus, the existence and effectiveness of social entrepreneurship is of significant strategic interest to municipal governments (Bornstein 2004; Dees, Emerson, and Economy 2001; Waddock and Post 1991).

Today, very little is known about the ways in which municipalities foster and support social entrepreneurship (Lee 2002; Morse and Dudley 2002). Yet, municipal support has become increasingly important in recent years as state and federal funding for social issues has been cut back and the need for other local funding sources has become more important. Federal policy is also increasingly emphasizing private sector activity, including faith-based initiatives, which often benefit from local government support (Johnson 2000; Reis 1999). This study examines activities through which municipalities support the development of programs and efforts by private individuals in their communities, and how these activities affect social entrepreneurship in their communities. This study is based on in-depth interviews and a mail survey of senior managers in cities with populations over 50,000.[1]

Several caveats pertain to this study. First, it assesses the views of senior appointed officials—not those of elected officials or private sector leaders, whose views on municipal government support are also relevant. Second, we only survey cities and do not examine support for social entrepreneurship provided by other jurisdictions.[2] Third, the study relies on subjective data rather than analysis of hard data, as no other systematic or government data exist on municipal government support for social entrepreneurship.[3] Fourth, it does not consider broader empirical matters, such as the use of nonprofits in service delivery. Finally, this empirical study does not involve philosophical discussions about the roles of government and the nonprofit sector in addressing community challenges; clearly, a strong private sector could be used to enhance or create effective new private–public partnerships, as well as to transfer and limit present public sector responsibilities (Cook, Dodds, and Mitchell 2003).

Municipal Support for Social Entrepreneurship

Social entrepreneurs are defined as individuals or private organizations that take the initiative to identify and address important social problems in their

communities. This definition focuses on the initial stages of developing new programs and includes specific activities, such as raising awareness, identifying and acquiring resources, coordinating actions with other agencies, and setting up programs in ways that are consistent with modern management strategies. The term "private" comprises both for-profit and nonprofit organizations, though the latter are typically more active in this area (Drucker 1985; Duhl 1995; McPherson n.d.), and excludes private agencies whose primary purpose is fund-raising or administering pass-through funding (e.g., United Way). This definition focuses on organizations and individuals that develop new programs, services, and solutions to specific problems (such as chemical dependency, unwanted pregnancy, illiteracy, and poor consumer credit) and those that address the needs of special populations (such as children with disabilities, caregivers of Alzheimer's patients, immigrant populations, veterans, and persons and families with medical problems). According to Henton, Melville, and Walesh (1997), effective social entrepreneurs (1) have the ability to see opportunity, (2) have an entrepreneurial personality, (3) are able to work in teams and provide collaborative leadership, and (4) have a genuine, long-term, focused commitment to their communities (see also Ashley 2000; Brooks 2002; Sayani 2003).

The term *social entrepreneur* is of recent vintage. It was coined in the late 1990s to describe individuals who exhibit vision, energy, and ability to develop new ways of alleviating social problems in their communities (Dees 1998; Drayton 2002; Johnson 2000; Merisalo 2000). These are not business entrepreneurs but people who lead to bring about new community solutions, frequently through organizations.[4] They follow the civic tradition of energized citizens who bring solutions to social ills, often building important social charities and community programs (Levine 1984; Thompson, Alvy, and Lees 2000). Of course, social entrepreneurs are also expected use modern management practices in their efforts, including community-based and public–private partnerships, collaborative decision making, and diversified, revenue-generating approaches that look beyond sole reliance on public funding (Bellone and Goerl 1992; Boschee and McClurg 2003; Doig 1987). These activities involve working with others, both inside and outside their organizations, and with municipal governments.

This study focuses on the roles of municipalities in supporting community-based social entrepreneurship. There are several rationales for municipal support. First, social entrepreneurs bring leadership and resources to communities. As noted earlier, communities often need these resources to address their problems. Second, private initiatives are often thought to incorporate considerable innovation and experimentation, and nonprofits are regarded as cost-effective service providers (Weisbrod 1997; Savas 1987). Third, social entrepreneurship allows public leaders to focus their energies and attention on other matters for which no private initiatives are available, such as environmental regulation or metropolitan planning (Frederickson 1982; Greenfield and Strickon 1981; Kuratko and Hodgetts 1998).[5]

There are several ways in which municipal government managers can support the efforts of social entrepreneurs to develop new programs. These include raising awareness, helping social entrepreneurs to acquire resources (including direct municipal support), and coordinating efforts among social entrepreneurs and others in program implementation.

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Raising Awareness

Municipalities support social entrepreneurship by increasing community awareness of the issues addressed by social entrepreneurs (Lewis 1980; Young 1997). Municipal managers can speak out on important matters, as well as participate in forums and other events, thereby providing some measure of legitimacy and interest to the efforts of social entrepreneurs (Rainey and Steinbauer 2002). They can also ask elected officials to discuss specific issues in public meetings (Lewis 1980). Municipal governments can collect and provide data on important social issues and educate beginning social entrepreneurs in essential planning, program, and resource-development strategies, such as those related to grant writing or facilities planning.

Resource Acquisition

Municipalities assist social entrepreneurs in resource acquisition by providing public resources and helping social entrepreneurs acquire additional resources from other organizations. For example, cities can provide start-up or seed money for program development (Herman and Redina 2001), and municipal managers can refer social entrepreneurs to their government grant writers, who can assist them in identifying grant opportunities and funding sources. Moreover, municipalities can join social entrepreneurs in submitting grant and funding proposals and pledge to match funds from private sources. Such direct municipal support can leverage other (state, federal, or private) funding, which

can be important in this era of budgetary limitations and increased competition for social services funding. Cities can also provide multiyear funding and in-kind support through other program activities that make funding requests to higher levels of government more attractive. Beyond this, cities can support social entrepreneurs directly through city resources, regardless of proposals to other funding sources. Finally, municipal managers can provide referrals and access to others who may help social entrepreneurs obtain resources, including groups associated with space or leasing opportunities in their communities. In short, resources can be made available in many different ways.

Coordination and Implementation

Many community initiatives require coordination, and many municipalities have considerable expertise in establishing and managing coalitions and networks of organizations (Berman 1996; Hart 1984). These networks provide municipalities with an opportunity to assist social entrepreneurs with program implementation. For example, municipalities can work with individual organizations to ensure that they share information and adequately cooperate with each other. Public managers can also help social entrepreneurs by assisting in matters that make program implementation easier, such as expediting permitting or approval for a project. They can use networks as an opportunity to define and manage standards for program performance and management, thereby improving outcomes. In addition, they can assist in forming and leading the development of coalitions (Bryson and Crosby 1992; Chrislip and Larson 1994; Luke 1998). It is obvious that although any one of these activities might have only marginal impact on social entrepreneurship in a community, the combination of several could have a substantial impact on the overall capacity of social entrepreneurs (Thompson 2002).

Despite these possibilities for municipal support, some concerns may cause diminished municipal support for social entrepreneurship. First, social entrepreneurship implies power sharing, and some public managers or elected officials may be reluctant to give up control over "their" issues. Second, municipal managers may be suspect of the abilities or agendas of some individuals or organizations. They may not believe that certain causes or strategies are appropriate for public support. In addition, as one reviewer of this article noted, "everyone has their favorite charity, including senior managers and elected officials (who) are often asked to sit on boards of local nonprofits. The question of who gets funded and who does not could be influenced by one's personal background or experiences with various groups." Third, social entrepreneurs vary in their ability to manage programs professionally, and some of their tactics may make municipal managers uncomfortable. This makes them questionable partners, or ones who are perceived as requiring substantial guidance. Fourth, legal and contractual considerations may limit some forms of funding or support for social entrepreneurs. For example, some municipalities may restrict support to organizations that provide services to all members of the community, not just a limited few. [6,7] Fifth, social entrepreneurs may propose initiatives that are at odds with existing programs, funding priorities, or policies, such as programs that overlap or even conflict with existing public programs. Sixth, some authors have stated that public support might corrupt the social mission of nonprofits by focusing on areas of funding or revenue opportunity. As Lee (2002) notes, "If very successful financially, such a program could be like the tail wagging the dog" or could lead to mission creep. However, others have shown that nonprofits can be both entrepreneurial and true to their mission (Brinckerhoff 2000; Brown and Troutt 2004; Hughes and Luksetich 2004). Clearly, these factors may affect municipal support for social entrepreneurship.

Empirical information about the level of municipal support for social entrepreneurship as well as the impact of the foregoing concerns is lacking, though. Experience in cognate areas suggests that increased use and familiarity often ameliorates such concerns over time. The results summarized here suggest that in the view of public managers, social entrepreneurship is widespread in communities, and it is significantly advanced by municipal support.

Methodology

A survey was mailed to city managers and chief administrative officers (CAOs) of 544 U.S. cities with populations over 50,000 during the fall of 2003, and in-depth interviews were conducted in early 2004.[8] Following a pilot survey, three rounds of mailings were sent; in all, 202 responses were received, for a response rate of 37.1 percent.[9] Most of the questionnaires (56.7 percent) were completed by the addressees (city managers or CAOs). Of the remainder, about half were completed by assistant city managers. Those with titles such as city clerk, deputy manager, mayor, or planning director answered a small portion of the surveys. We refer to the respondents as "senior managers" because of their varying positions. On average, respondents had worked 15.8 years in government and had 10.1 years of service within their present jurisdictions.

Among respondents, 34.0 percent were younger than 45, 46.5 percent were between 45 and 54 years old, and 18.8 percent were over 54 years old. Of the total, 57.4 percent reported that their highest degree was in public administration, 11.7 percent reported business administration, and 11.2 percent stated political science. Among all respondents, 57.5 percent had a master's degree, and 72.1 percent were male. Comparisons of sample and population demographics suggest

that the sample is broadly representative by form of government, size, and region.[10] To explore the possibility of sample bias, we examined whether the addressees (city managers and CAOs) differed from other respondents in their assessment, but we found that they did not. We also examined whether the number of years in the jurisdiction affected respondents' assessments, as well as other respondents' characteristics discussed later. We concluded that the balance or mix of respondents did not affect the results.

In addition to the mail survey responses, we also conducted interviews with respondents who indicated either a high or low use of social entrepreneurship activities. The purpose of these interviews was to assess respondents' views regarding the adequacy of current efforts, the role of public managers in the process, the forms (models) of these efforts, and specific strategies they used to increase social entrepreneurial activities. Such interviews provided texture to the survey data and deepened our understanding of the relationships studied.

Results

Tables 1 and 2 assess municipal support in the three broad areas mentioned previously: (1) implementation and coordination, (2) resource acquisition, and (3) information and awareness. The findings show that most local jurisdictions are engaged in supporting private organizations that work on important social issues, but there is also considerable variation in the extent to which they do so. For example, the data show that 70.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their jurisdiction encourages private organizations that work on important social issues to work together; 59.7 percent agreed or strongly agreed that their jurisdiction supports efforts by community organizations to raise awareness about social conditions; 53.5 percent indicated that they help such organizations deal various government agencies; 52.2 percent of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they collect data about social issues in their community; and 46.5 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they provide a structure for coordination.

The responses also show areas of support that are less frequent, especially concerning resource acquisition. About 43.1 percent of respondents said they help private organizations submit grant proposals. Slightly more than one-third (36.3 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they support the grant proposals of private organizations, and 35.1 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they help private organizations identify funding opportunities that address important social issues and problems. Fully 26.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they provide program support to address important social issues or problems, and less than one-quarter (23.8 percent) said they help private organizations locate grant opportunities. About one-third of respondents agreed only somewhat with the statements listed in tables 1 and 2, and about one-fifth disagreed to varying degrees.[11]

Table 1 Municipal Assistance for Private Organizations

"We assist private organizations that work on important social issues or causes by…"[a]	Agree/Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree[b]
A. Resource Acquisition			
Contributing to grant proposals of private organizations by pledging support through city programs and resources	43.1	30.2	26.7
Helping private organizations to submit grant proposals on important issues	43.1	27.7	29.2
Participating with private organizations in grant proposals on important issues	41.3	34.3	24.4
Supporting the grant proposals of private organizations	36.3	32.3	31.3
Helping private organizations identify funding opportunities related to important social issues and problems	35.1	31.2	33.7
Providing program support for private organizations that address important social issues and problems	26.2	33.2	40.6
Helping private organizations to locate grant opportunities	23.8	31.7	44.6
Contributing start-up funding for private organizations that address important social issues and problems	19.8	23.8	56.4
B. Assist Coordination and Implementation			
Encouraging community organizations to work together	70.3	24.3	5.4
Conducting periodic meetings with city officials	56.9	37.1	5.9
Helping them deal with various government agencies	53.5	30.2	16.3
Providing them with counsel when they ask for it	49.5	23.8	26.7
Coordinating their efforts with others	48.0	32.7	19.3
Helping them with permit applications	48.0	31.2	20.8
Creating community coalitions to address common problems	47.0	36.6	16.3
Providing a structure for local coordination	46.5	33.7	19.8

Note: All numbers are percentages.

[a] Cronbach's alpha scores for index variables are 0.85 (coordination and implementation) and 0.85 (resources acquisition).

[b] Includes "don't know," "disagree somewhat," "disagree," "strongly disagree" categories.

Table 2 Municipal Information and Awareness

	"In our local government, we……"[a]		
	Agree/Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree[b]
C. Provide Information and Awareness			
Assemble data from other sources about social issues and problems	59.7	18.9	21.4
Support the efforts of community organizations to raise awareness about social problems and issues relevant to the community	57.2	33.8	9.0
Issue reports on community conditions	54.7	25.4	19.9
Collect data about social issues and problems in our community	52.2	26.9	20.9
Speak out on important social issues and problems	51.7	30.3	17.9
Provide data on issues that might be helpful to social entrepreneurs	48.3	28.4	23.7
Helping social entrepreneurs learn about program development	35.3	31.3	33.3

[a] Cronbach's alpha score for index variables is 0.91 (awareness and information).
[b] Includes "don't know," "disagree somewhat," "disagree," "strongly disagree" categories.

Figure 1 shows the results of an aggregate measure (index) of the items reported in tables 1 and 2. First, index measures were constructed for the items that make up each of three areas—coordination and implementation, resource acquisition, and information and awareness—as reported in tables 1 and 2.[12] Each of the index measures was created by summing the responses from tables 1 and 2. Second, the three index measures were aggregated into an overall measure of municipal support for social entrepreneurship. Figure 1 is based on this aggregate measure, which encompasses all of the survey items from tables 1 and 2. It shows that 34.2 percent of cities can be classified as actively supporting private organizations, 44.2 percent provide some support, and 21.6 percent provide very little support (see footnote 12). The fraction of those that provide "active support" is somewhat smaller than the other measures shown in tables 1 and 2; high levels of agreement in one area do not necessarily imply high ratings in other areas and hence lead to averaging. Indeed, correlations among the three submeasures are moderate, and jurisdictions that support social entrepreneurship in one area do not always have a strong record in other areas. [13] For example, further analysis shows that among respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that they provide a structure for local coordination, less than half (46.2 percent) also agreed or strongly agreed that they support the grant proposals of private organizations.

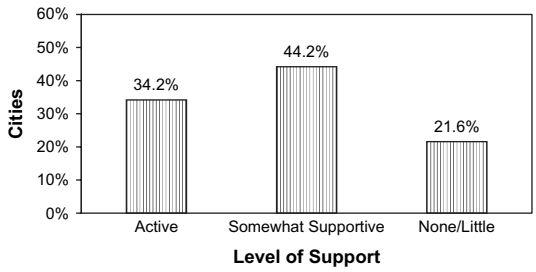

Figure 1 Municipal Support for Social Entrepreneurship

The in-depth interviews provided many examples of ways that managers support social entrepreneurship in their communities. Among those in communities that indicated a broad range of efforts, many respondents commented on ways they help individuals and private organizations to obtain finding. For example, one respondent said, "We help nonprofits apply for and obtain grants. We also provide grants directly to them. Now, none of these grants are especially large, but they do have 'leveraging power'—they are more likely to be able to obtain grants from other sources." Some of these processes are informal: "We often hear of grant opportunities that our nonprofit partners may be interested in. Then we call them or e-mail them . . . we help them with almost every aspect from grant identification to grant writing." Others have also established a well-coordinated, formal process: "We distribute a package of funding information several times a year, usually coordinating with our budget cycle. . . . Consideration is given to all applicants who apply. The city council looks over all applications and then holds a hearing in which all applicants have three minutes to make their plea for funding. The council then decides whom to fund, on the basis of this information."

Some comments illustrate how municipalities reach out to the community and nonprofit organizations: "We bring all parties together—government, nonprofits and citizens with needs." Another respondent indicated, "Our city helps nonprofits find the appropriate agencies to work with. . . We provide them with important data or information that they may need for funding, implementation or coordination . . . We help them from every stage of program development." Still another commented, "We encourage all departments in the city . . . to find nonprofit partners and foster positive relationships with them." Interviewees reported that in these partnerships, leaders share and learn from each other, helping nonprofits create awareness for initiatives: "We also help raise awareness, and if necessary, garner support for programs that are located in communities that do not necessarily

Table 3 Cutting-Edge Support for Social Entrepreneurship

One area that we are especially proud of is the "Fair Oaks Community Center." This center is paid for from both the city and county (each pay about half). We house over 30 nonprofits in this center. They exist there for free—they pay absolutely no taxes, rent, or even fees for electricity or supplies. There are 6–7 classrooms where they provide training for the community, a multi-purpose room, a couple of conference rooms, and other facilities that they use, again, for free. We provide them with office space, custodial services, administrative services and everything in between for free. Through this, we house over 30 different nonprofits. This is important because it allows us to better serve the community through our nonprofit organizations. We set them up, financially, and they are then able to provide our citizens with needed services. About $250,000–$300,000 of our general fund is earmarked for this. We have a citizens coalition, along with government leaders, that determines who is allowed into this space. We deal with everything from senior citizens issues, to youth initiatives, family matters and housing issues.
Medbank is a program that started about five years ago. It was an idea created by a group of people who noticed that certain people in society didn't have access to prescription medication. This group began working with the city to alleviate this problem. Medbank, which consists of city staff working in conjunction with several nonprofit groups, has directly contacted private pharmaceutical companies to obtain free prescription drugs for many chronic disorders, such as diabetes, high blood pressure, allergies, and so on. Medbank now provides these prescription drugs to individuals for free. (With doctor's prescriptions, of course). Our city is very supportive of this program. We provide direct funding for this program and also help them locate other funding sources. We have provided a framework for them to coordinate their efforts with others, and build up a volunteer base in the local community. We also have encouraged other community groups to work with them on related issues. We have been very vocal about educating the public out on this important social program and encouraging more civic involvement.
One of our most successful examples is the North Greenwood Health Resource Center (NGHRC). It was the dream of a nurse who worked out of her apartment to provide healthcare for residents of a low income, minority, and community. She started a nonprofit organization when the need became too great for her to act alone, and called it the NGHRC. We began working with the NGHRC to build a facility for the healthcare and community relations. We used brownfields money to clean up some land that we owned in the city. It used to be a gas station, so we cleaned up the land and helped them find funding to develop it. We helped them find grants for virtually every aspect of the project—from construction of the center to funding for the services and projects it provides to the community. We also used to lease the land to them for $1.00 or something like that and we recently sold it to them for about $1.00. It is a great success story of how an individual, on her own, recognized a true need in the community and tried to work to solve it. When the problem got too big for one person alone, she created a nonprofit to expand. When that didn't work, the city stepped in to help out with grant identification, writing and support. We helped them find the right land, and right funding sources. We didn't have start up money for them, but we did have some land that, as I said, we found funding for them to have it cleaned up. So in essence, we provided them with the resources they needed.

Source: Interviews

want them. For example, we have a center called the Children's Place at Home Safe—a home and temporary foster center for abused or special needs children. The city worked very hard with private community leaders to generate support and acceptance for this program. We educated the community on the types of children who would be there, and how they would affect the local community." Table 3 provides additional examples of how municipalities support social entrepreneurship.

We also examined correlates of the aggregate measure of municipal support. For example, we assessed the prevalence of concerns about municipal support for social entrepreneurship and their impact on that support. According to the respondents, 26.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that private organizations sometimes rival public officials for leadership on these issues; 29.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that private organizations sometimes propose efforts that are at odds with existing programs; 26.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed that private organizations sometimes advocate agendas that are not in the public interest; 23.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they sometimes pursue funding opportunities that dilute their missions; and 34.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they are sometimes ill equipped for the tasks that they take on. Across all respondents, about half (49.5 percent) did not identify any of these problems, and 25.8 percent identified one or two. However, there were no statistically significant associations between these items—or any index of these items—and the level of municipal support for social entrepreneurship in local jurisdictions. It seems likely that although perceptions of these problems do in fact diminish support, some jurisdictions that provide support to social entrepreneurs also experience these problems. Nonetheless, they are still able to overcome these problems, yet they are able to provide support. Indeed, some interviewees reported that efforts to help nonprofits become more successful include substantial dialogue between nonprofit and municipal leaders about areas of common interests and opportunities for program support.

We further examined the association between support for social entrepreneurship and the use of public–private partnerships. Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed that their jurisdiction has many public–private partnerships were more likely to report that their jurisdiction actively supports social entrepreneurship (as shown in figure 1): 41.9 percent versus 25.7 (tau-c = .240, $p < .01$). This may indicate that jurisdictions that have worked through the challenges of supporting private organizations, such as working out contracts and possible legal constraints, have also worked through the challenges of treating all private providers equally, as mentioned in the framework.

We further analyzed the aggregate measure of municipal support by region, city, and form of government but found few such associations. "Active" levels of support are somewhat less common in jurisdictions in the South than in other regions (22.0 percent versus 37.0 percent) and more common in jurisdictions with populations over 100,000 compared to those with smaller populations (40.3 percent versus 29.6 percent). We found no differences by form of government. Rather, the level of government support is associated with measures that one would ordinarily expect to be associated with municipal efforts. For example, among cities that agreed or strongly agreed that their council members are interested in social issues and problems, 40.4 percent have an active level of support, compared to 24.4 percent of cities that did not agree or strongly agree with this statement. This result is consistent with the interview findings. Likewise, among those who agreed or strongly agreed that managers in their jurisdiction exhibit a lot of energy and personal drive, 42.3 percent have an active level of support, compared to 21.3 percent of cities that did not agree with this statement.[14]

Impact on Social Entrepreneurship

Slightly more than half of the respondents reported that their jurisdiction enjoys high levels of social entrepreneurship (see table 4, section A). For example, 61.4 percent stated that in their jurisdiction, there are many individuals or organizations that take the initiative to address social problems or causes, and 50.5 percent agreed or strongly agreed that such individuals create innovative new approaches. Creating an aggregate index measure of these items and using the same category values, 55.7 percent of jurisdictions were found to have a "high" perceived level of social entrepreneurship, 28.9 percent had a moderate level, and 15.4 percent had a low or very low level.[15] Further analysis showed that 10.4 percent of jurisdictions could be classified as having "very high" levels of social entrepreneurship.[16]

Table 4, section B shows respondents' perceptions of the "quality" or character of social entrepreneurship in their community. Many (69.3 percent), agreed or strongly agreed that individuals and organizations in their community are strong advocates for action on social issues; 63.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they act with the interest of the community in mind; 56.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they work effectively with government officials; and 48.0 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they frequently develop innovative new approaches to address issues. However, somewhat fewer (44.8 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they have suitable backgrounds for developing new programs. Similarly, 41.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed that they run efficient and effective programs. Still fewer (35.1 percent) agreed or strongly agreed that they are effective in obtaining new funding or provide a high level of accountability for their programs.

Statistical analysis shows that municipal support is associated with high levels of social entrepreneurship. A strong, significant association exists between municipal support and the prevalence of social

Table 4 Perceptions of Social Entrepreneurship

	Agree/Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Disagree[a]
A. Perceived Prevalence of Social Entrepreneurship			
"In our jurisdiction, we have many individuals or organizations …"[b]			
Inside our city developing programs that address social problems/causes	63.4	24.8	11.9
Inside our city taking initiative to address social problems/causes	61.4	28.7	9.9
Inside our city identifying social problems/causes	59.4	22.3	18.3
Inside our city seeking and obtaining funding to address social problems/causes	56.4	30.7	9.4
Inside our city building support for social problems/causes	53.2	33.3	13.4
Inside our city creating innovative, new approaches to addressing social problems/causes	50.5	33.7	15.8
B. Perceived Character of Social Entrepreneurship			
"Individuals/organizations in our community who address social problems…"			
Are strong advocates for social issues or causes	69.3	22.8	7.9
Act with the interest of the community in mind	63.2	26.4	10.4
Work effectively with government officials	56.2	28.4	15.4
Participate or lead in community-based planning efforts	53.5	30.7	15.8
Frequently develop new, innovative approaches to address issues	48.0	26.7	25.2
Have suitable backgrounds for developing new programs	44.8	27.4	17.9
Run effective and efficient programs	41.8	35.8	22.4
Increase the pool of resources and leadership in the community	41.8	34.8	23.4
Are effective in obtaining new funding and revenues for their efforts	35.1	36.6	28.2
Provide a high level of accountability for their programs	35.1	27.2	37.6

Note: All numbers are percentages.

[a] Includes "don't know," "disagree somewhat," "disagree," "strongly disagree" categories.

[b] Cronbach's alpha score of index variables is 0.93 (perceived prevalence).

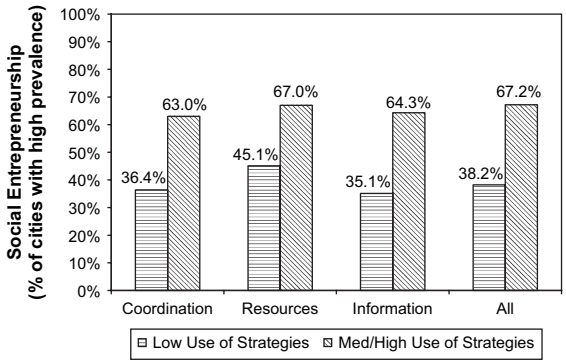

Figure 2 Impact of Municipal Support

entrepreneurship (tau-c = . 334, $p < .01$). Among cities with an active level of municipal support, 74.2 percent reported having a high level of social entrepreneurship, compared to 56.3 percent of jurisdictions with a "somewhat supportive" level of government support and 23.1 percent among those with little or no government support. Thus, although it cannot be said that municipal support is a necessary condition for social entrepreneurship, the presence of municipal support clearly enhances it. This point is illustrated in figure 2, which shows that medium to high activity in each area of municipal support (including coordination, information, and resources) is associated with significantly higher levels of social entrepreneurship. The increases in perceived levels of social entrepreneurship are substantial.[17]

Furthermore, a strong relationship exists between the level of social entrepreneurship and its perceived quality (table 4). For example, among respondents who indicated a high level of social entrepreneurship in their jurisdictions, 55.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed that organizations in their community that address social problems run efficient and effective programs, compared to 23.9 percent of those who indicated lower levels of social entrepreneurship. Similarly, among respondents who indicated a high level of social entrepreneurship in their jurisdictions, 45.7 percent agreed or strongly agreed that such organizations are effective in obtaining new funding for their efforts, compared to only 7.1 percent in jurisdictions with low levels of social entrepreneurship. These differences are statistically significant at the 1 percent level.[18]

The interviews provide additional insight into the role of municipal governments in social entrepreneurship. Competition is one element that increases effectiveness in the entrepreneurial process. For example, one respondent indicated, "We have several programs where nonprofit organizations provide social service-centered programs. . . . These organizations often bid against each other on contracts. They learn about pricing, and service expectations from one another. With each consecutive contract or service agreement, the bar is raised. This sets the level of expectation for the next round of service delivery." Increased social entrepreneurship allows more collaboration, which also increases effectiveness: "Nonprofits have 'linked arms' locally to combat important issues and combine forces. Social issues involve many different facets, so it would make sense that solutions to these problems would include many different leaders, learning from one another and working together," and, "the more we all work together, the more our expectations change—we expect more efficiency and effectiveness." Obviously, governments play an important role in helping nonprofits and others work together.

Finally, table 5 shows the results of two regression analyses that further support these findings. Column A shows the effect of municipal support on the perceived level of social entrepreneurship. The model includes control variables such as individuals and organizations in the community who address social problems being competitive with public officials and also being prepared for the tasks they take on. The model takes into account whether jurisdictions have a perceived tradition of being socially minded, which likely increases the pool of social entrepreneurs, as well as council orientation toward new program development. Table 5, column A shows that municipal government support is positively associated with social entrepreneurship ($t = 5.918$, $p < .01$), controlling for these other factors.[19] This result is consistent and triangulates with the foregoing results. It is also consistent with the idea that competition among community groups is significantly associated with higher levels of social entrepreneurship, suggesting that competition causes private organizations to strive to do better. The model also indicates that perceptions of the jurisdiction as being historically "social minded" are significantly associated with higher levels of perceived social entrepreneurship. The point, of course, is that municipal support is associated with increased social entrepreneurship, over and above these other factors.[20,21]

Table 5, column B, shows the effect of municipal support on the perceived quality of social entrepreneurship while controlling for the level of social entrepreneurship and the control variables. Quality is measured as an index variable of the items from table 4, section B and assesses, for example, the ability to run effective and efficient programs in the respondent's jurisdiction, participation in community-based efforts, the ability to act with the public interest in mind, advocacy, and the ability to obtain new funding. The Cronbach's alpha measure of internal reliability of this index variable is 0.89. Results show that local municipal government support is positively associated with the perceived quality of social entrepreneurship ($t = 4.981$, $p < .01$), even when controlling for the level of social

Table 5 Regression

	Dependent Variables			
	Social Entrepreneurship[a]			
	Level (A)		Quality (B)	
Constant	.767	(1.832)	1.116**	(3.176)
Local government support	.434**	(5.918)	.340**	(4.981)
Level of social entrepreneurship	n/a		.425**	(6.598)
Our council is conservative about adopting new programs	–.076*	(–2.025)	.157**	(4.942)
Historically, this city is "social minded"	.199**	(4.617)	.007	(.174)
There is much competition among community groups	.109**	(3.062)	–.060	(–1.935)
Depts. are empowered to make important decisions	.117	(1.876)	.041	(.788)
Private orgs. rival public officials for leadership	–.042	(–1.827)	–.002	(–.045)
Private orgs. are ill equipped for the tasks they take on	–.088	(–1.827)	–.194**	(–4.766)
City size	.215**	(3.086)	–.053	(–.893)
Form of government[b]	.411**	(2.862)	–.050	(–.406)
Northeast	.414*	(2.093)	–.016	(–.098)
South	.377*	(2.343)	–.063	(–.456)
West	–.098	(–.708)	–.042	(–.362)
N	*181*		*177*	
Adjusted R^2	*.371*		*.504*	

** $p < .01$; * $p < .05$.

[a] Regression coefficient shown (*t* statistic in parentheses).

[b] Mayor-council = 1, council-manager = 2.

entrepreneurship ($t = 6.598$, $p < .01$). This is a somewhat stringent test that examines the impact of municipal support on quality over and above any shared learning and support than comes from having a broad cadre of social entrepreneurs in a community. A further result is that the quality of social entrepreneurship is impaired when private organizations are ill equipped for the tasks they take on. Overall, the results show that municipal support increases the level and quality of social entrepreneurship.

Conclusion and Discussion

Slightly more than half of the jurisdictions contacted for this study reported high levels of social entrepreneurship, and this is significantly enhanced by municipal activities—including information and community awareness building, coordination and support in program implementation, and assistance in resource acquisition. We found that cities vary greatly in their level of support for social entrepreneurship: 34.2 percent of cities could be classified as actively supporting private organizations, 44.2 percent provide some support, and 21.6 percent provide very little support. Activities that are frequently mentioned as having a considerable impact on private organizations' ability to develop new programs are helping social entrepreneurs to apply for grants, bringing social entrepreneurs together to collaborate, providing them with information about social conditions that can lead to or be used in grant applications, and helping social entrepreneurs develop new programs.

Jurisdictions with extensive involvement and support for social entrepreneurs often have a long history of engagement. The development of comprehensive support programs and policies for social entrepreneurship often reflects prior engagement with private individuals and organizations, as local managers may feel comfortable with these individuals and organizations based on their track records and community acceptance. They may also have demonstrated the ability to tackle new issues and work collaboratively with others, which reflects the development of broader efforts and a deepening of these relationships and commitments. The development of broad and deep relationships may lead to clearer roles and philosophies for the city, as expressed by one respondent:

The development of comprehensive support programs and policies for social entrepreneurship often reflects prior engagement with private individuals and organizations, as local managers may feel comfortable with these individuals and organizations based on their track records and community acceptance.

> We have to be willing to open the door in the first place. Nonprofits and business leaders aren't going to come knocking without us asking. Then we need to promote a good environment. They need to feel like they are important partners to us. If we don't treat them right, they can take their toys and go somewhere else, where they are treated better. It is important to us to maintain good relations with outside

groups. The more sophisticated we are in terms of support, the more likely they are to come around, as well. Some of these individuals and groups are pretty sophisticated, and expect the same of us.

Although not all cities identify with this particular statement, senior public managers play an important role by setting the tone for relationships between city administrators and social entrepreneurs. Senior public managers help jurisdictions work out new arrangements and partnerships with other organizations and reach understanding and consensus about which social issues require or justify municipal involvement. Senior managers are also pivotal in working through the myriad issues that may be involved in such support, such as assessing and ensuring the quality and performance of potential partners. They must be willing to work with organizations that serve only selected clienteles, seek to advance a particular philosophy, or any other of the potential barriers mentioned in this article, such as overcoming legal and contractual challenges to working with social entrepreneurs.[22] Top managers can also work with council members to identify new opportunities for collaboration. Clearly, senior public managers are critical to the establishment of strong relations between government and social entrepreneurs in their communities.

In the end, communities benefit from having a cadre of energetic social entrepreneurs who bring solutions to the common problems they face. How cities manage these individuals and private organizations may go a long way toward determining how effective they are at addressing their community issues.

Jurisdictions that wish to increase their support for social entrepreneurship are often confronted with two important and practical issues. First, data on jurisdictions' support for social entrepreneurship is generally absent, yet as the old saying goes, "what gets measured gets done." It seems likely that many jurisdictions could readily develop such measures, especially when building up local capabilities is made a priority. Indeed, budget cutbacks at the federal and state levels and reliance on private initiatives increase the salience of this priority.

Second, jurisdictions that endeavor to support social entrepreneurs may find themselves confronted with legal questions (e.g., is it appropriate to support faith-based organizations with public funds?) and propriety questions (e.g., would support of this organization give the appearance of favoritism?). Though the answers typically vary across jurisdictions and states, managers can identify and learn from jurisdictions that have developed policies, guidelines, and criteria for supporting social entrepreneurship in their jurisdictions. Addressing legal and ethical matters is a first step toward routinizing the process of supporting local social entrepreneurship.

This study has broad applications to the field of public administration. First, it reaffirms the importance of training and hiring managers who not only can think creatively and unconventionally but also have the good practical sense and political savvy that is critical to building consensus among public and community leaders. Many of the examples discussed here presume the presence of managers with such skills. A second application is the development of new public–private partnerships whose purpose is nothing less than the support and transformation of local communities through homegrown efforts and organizations. The role of consortia in the development of effective grant proposals by emerging nonprofits is an underresearched form of public–private partnership, as is the creative ability of municipal leaders to draw on a broad range of tools to help emerging social entrepreneurs. Finally, more research is needed with regard to the municipal funding guidelines of nonprofits, the legal and contractual concerns associated with social entrepreneurship, as well as the role of other jurisdictions (such as counties) in supporting social entrepreneurship.

In the end, communities benefit from having a cadre of energetic social entrepreneurs who bring solutions to the common problems they face. How cities manage these individuals and private organizations may go a long way toward determining how effective they are at addressing their community issues.

Notes

1. This study uses the terms *municipal* and *city* synonymously. Although in some states, the term *municipal* may include other types of jurisdictions, in this study, only cities are surveyed.
2. Articles in various editions of the ICMA's *Municipal Yearbook* (MacManus and Bullock 2003; Miranda and Anderson 1994; Morley 1999; Renner and DeSantis 1998; Warner, Ballard, and Hefetz 2003) state that cities are typically more involved in the provision of the previously mentioned services than counties, hence our reason for studying city support. But in some settings, counties may be more active, and we stress that this study does not examine the impact of counties on social entrepreneurship.
3. One reviewer asked us to provide actual data on municipal support for nonprofits, such as the

percentage of cities giving support to nonprofits and the percentage of city budgets going to nonprofits. No such national data exist. The primary source of nonprofit financial data is IRS Form 990, Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax. This form does not disaggregate revenues and other income obtained from governments by type of jurisdiction, such as cities (NCCS 2004). Indeed, many authors concur that it is very difficult to track sources of nonprofit funding (Froelich, Knoepfle, and Pollak 2000; Keating and Frumkin 2003; Stone, Hager, and Griffin 2001). The Governmental Accounting Standards Board does not require cities to report expenditures by type of organization, and such information is typically not provided. Typically, expenditures are provided by service area. As one government financial reporting expert noted, "One would think that these data exist, but they do not, unless individual jurisdictions choose to provide them."

4. As Morse and Dudley (2002) note, "We are not talking about business entrepreneurs who innovate in the name of profit. We are not talking about the much-contested public entrepreneur focused on public sector performance. The new form of entrepreneurship discussed here is civic (or social) entrepreneurship. . . . What makes civic entrepreneurship new as opposed to past forms of civic activism is the practice of collaborative leadership." Examples of individual social entrepreneurs can be found on such Web sites as www.ashoka.org.
5. Concerns about such support are discussed later in this section.
6. A variety of legal and contractual issues may complicate city–nonprofit relations. In addition to the problem identified here (service delivery restricted to an organizational membership), other matters often involve disclosing financial accounting through IRS Form 990 for nonprofits; funding tied to nonprofit compliance with numerous federal and state regulations (such as hiring practices and employee drug testing); establishing and maintaining case records and adhering to strict standards of confidentiality; providing adequate and timely accountability; cooperating with external evaluation activities; and establishing procedures for agreeing to and rectifying deficiencies (including arbitration). These issues vary greatly on a state-by-state basis, are usually identified by legal counsel and through the experiences of other jurisdictions, and are often dealt with through the contracting process (Brown and Troutt 2004; Hughes and Luksetich 2004; Jeavons 2002; Kingston and Bolton 2004; White House 2004). The Welfare and Medicaid Reform Act of 1996 allows states to contract social services with charitable, religious, or private agencies.
7. The literature is decidedly mixed about the impact of legal and contractual restrictions. Studies by Nutt (2004) and Brooks (2000) suggest that legal issues may complicate municipal governments' ability to work with or fund social entrepreneurs. Although some research (Froelich, Knoepfle, and Pollak 2000; Stone, Hager, and Griffin 2001) indicates that increases in administrative complexity, rules, and regulations, and financial accounting may lead to a corresponding decrease in partnerships and funding between government and nonprofits, other studies (Brown and Moore 2001; Keating and Frumkin 2003) indicate that reengineering nonprofit financial accountability and promoting clear communication and trust can restore opportunities for collaboration and funding.
8. Total population data and city names were provided by the ICMA *Municipal Yearbook* (2001).
9. This response rate is consistent with other research, such as Brown and Potoski (2003), Hays and Kearney (2001), Kearney, Feldman, and Scavo (2000), Kim (2002), Lee and Olshfski (2002) and Roch and Van Slyke (2004), all of which had response rates between 30 percent and 38 percent. Studies with higher response rates in the literature sometimes involved shorter surveys (our survey had more than 250 items), surveys administered to subordinates with agency approval (e.g., Office of Personnel Management surveys), self-selected respondents (e.g., those indicating willingness to respond if contacted), small-sample surveys (e.g., of similar agencies in 50 states), or topics of high salience to a targeted sample (e.g., perceptions of customer satisfaction by customer service managers). Our survey does not have these features.
10. As often occurs, participation in the Northeast was a bit lower than would be expected based on the number of cities in that region. Form of government is defined as having either a council-manager form of government, a mayor-council form of government, or some other form of government. Assessment of form of government was taken from the *Municipal Yearbook* (ICMA 2001), and merged with the respondents' completed surveys. In the sample, 70.6 percent of the jurisdictions had a council-manager form of government, 27.8 percent had a mayor-council form, and only 1.5 percent had some other form.
11. Cronbach's alpha measures of internal reliability, shown in tables 1 and 2, are all above .70, the conventional minimum standard. Indeed, they are 0.88, 0.88, and 0.89, which are considered quite strong. Each of the index measures was created through summation responses to the items shown in tables 1 and 2, done in customary ways. Cronbach's alpha measures how well a set of

items (or variables) are related to each other. It is a coefficient of reliability or consistency.

12. The results in figure 1 reflect an aggregate index measure of the three index measures reported earlier. The Cronbach's alpha of this aggregate index is 0.74. On a seven-point Likert scale (1 = strongly agree and 7 = strongly disagree), the category "active" reflects scores of 1.0–2.49; "somewhat supportive" reflects scores of 2.50–3.49; and "none/little" reflects scores of 3.5–7.0. The percentage levels reported in figure 1 are reasonably robust for any reasonable cutoff values that might be used. The aggregate index variable has a mean of 2.93, with a standard deviation of 0.79. Visual inspection suggests that it is normally distributed, though slightly skewed toward lower values.
13. For example, correlation of the coordination and resources index measures in table 1 is 0.42 between resources and information and 0.69 between information and coordination.
14. Earlier, we noted the possibility that personal experiences could affect municipal support for social entrepreneurship. In this regard, one interviewee commented, "It isn't easy determining who gets funding and who doesn't. We have many, many groups each year that approach us for partnering and funding. We try to be prudent in our decisions. We have a list of criteria that each group must meet. We also make sure that there aren't overlapping interests—such as two programs that meet the same need. We had an instance of this a few years ago, and encouraged the two groups to consolidate, work together, and apply for funding." This concern appears to speak more to the allocation of municipal support than to the level of support, which is the focus here. Chaves, Stephens, and Galaskiewicz (2004) and Hughes and Luksetich (2004) indicate that increased competition and government cutbacks in funding do not cause nonprofits to compromise their primary goals or missions for the sake of securing funding sources.
15. See footnote 5 for category values. The Cronbach's alpha for the items in table 4, section A, is 0.89.
16. Results for the index range from 1.00 to 1.49. The aggregate measure of social entrepreneurship was also analyzed by region, city, and form of government. "High" levels of activity are somewhat less common in Midwest jurisdictions than those in other regions (44.7 percent versus 55.6 percent); larger populations have modestly more entrepreneurship; and there are no significant differences by form of government.
17. Many interview comments make a direct link between municipal involvement and the effectiveness of new initiatives. One respondent stated, "Our city has made a commitment to working with and supporting nonprofits. We want them to be successful. For them to be successful means that we are successful, as well. When I say successful, our social programs prove that when you help a family out that is down on their luck they can turn their lives around and become a productive part of society. Usually this is within a year. Our nonprofits work very closely with us. We have one of the poorest school districts in one of the wealthiest areas in the USA. We go to local schools—some of which have a desperate need to have their playgrounds refurbished—and we provide them with funding for new sod and shrubs. The schools donate the land, and the nonprofits share it. For example, our Little League (a nonprofit organization) uses school land to promote programs. We sponsor the land and the school agrees to let us use it."
18. For these measures, tau-c = .253 and .245, respectively.
19. Despite the moderately high adjusted R^2 value of .38, we nonetheless present his model as exploratory, acknowledging that other factors also affect social entrepreneurship. It is noted, though, that models with other variables from this survey have also found that municipal support is significantly associated with social entrepreneurship.
20. The model also shows that councils that are conservative about adopting new programs that may negatively affect the level of social entrepreneurship. However, such councils are also associated with increased quality of social entrepreneurship, perhaps because of the additional screening or scrutiny that a conservative orientation may imply.
21. Of course, no model can include all factors. Our model does not include the impact of municipal legal restrictions on contracting or support for private organizations, for example. However, we view this as affecting the level of municipal support for social entrepreneurship, which is, of course, already included in the model.
22. Interviewees provide mixed responses. One interviewee stated, "We don't want to be seen as biased toward any [particular] group or preference. Mostly, we try to stick with groups that have a more neutral ground." But another respondent provides a pragmatic reason to the contrary: "Many of our [residents] are not from this country. They find common ground in organizations that have some religious affiliation. They also trust them more. When we work with these organizations, they give our programs and policies more legitimacy in the eyes of our constituents."

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Sponsors: Chinese Public Administration Society, University of Electronic Science and Technology of China, International Institute of Administrative Sciences, European Group of Public Administration, American Society for Public Administration, Moscow State University (Russia), and *Chinese Public Administration Journal*

Hosts: School of Humanities and Social Science of the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China (P.R. China) and Sino-British Culture and Language Exchange (UK)

Public administration is an ever-changing professional and research field. The 2006 International Conference on Public Administration (2nd ICPA), aiming at government innovation in an era of e-communication, e-learning, and e-government, seeks to provide a forum for distinguished speakers from academia, government, and industry to discuss problems and new ideas, share experiences of success and failure in public administration, explore the changes that public administration faces in all aspects of governance, and promote international cooperation in the field of public administration.

Paper topics may include but are not limited to:

- Science and technology in government
- Intergovernmental administration and management
- Administrative Ethics
- Emergency and crisis management
- Public law and administration
- Environmental and natural resources administration
- Budgeting and financial management
- E-governance
- Citizen empowerment

Paper Submittal

Papers should be written in English using Microsoft Word 2000 (or higher edition). The first page should include the following information: paper title, author name(s) and affiliation(s), abstract, postal address, phone and fax numbers, and e-mail address of the corresponding author. The submittal deadline is **July 15, 2006**, and accepted candidates will be notified by **August 15, 2006**.

All accepted papers will be published by the Press of the University of Electronic Science and Technology of China and indexed by ISSHP (Index to Social Sciences and Humanities Proceedings) and ISTP (Index to Scientific and Technical Proceedings) by ISA Web of Knowledge (U.S.), as were the proceedings of the 2005 International Conference on Public Administration.

Outside China
E-mail papers to donmenzel@tampabay.rr.com
Donald C. Menzel, PhD
3930 Americana Drive
Tampa, FL 33634
Tel. 813-886-6332

Within China
E-mail papers to ICPA@uestc.edu.cn
School of Humanities and Social Science
University of Electronic Science and Technology of China
Chengdu, Sichuan, P.R.C
Postal Code 610054
Tel. 86-28-83205246