field assistance to the various municipalities, the finance specialist on the institute staff conducts annual courses and prepares guidebooks for municipal and county finance officials.[33] In Tennessee, at the request of the Tennessee Municipal League and its member cities, the municipal technical advisory service was established in the University of Tennessee Extension Division. MTAS employs a number of staff specialists in the fields of finance and accounting, municipal management, codes and ordinances, and engineering. By law it is to furnish "* * * technical, consultative, and field services to municipalities in problems relating to fiscal administration, accounting, tax assessment and collection, law enforcement, improvements and public works, and any and all matters relating to municipal government, * * *" and to expend funds for "* * * studies and research in municipal government, publications, educational conferences and attendance thereat * * *."[34] Finally, State governments could alleviate this problem still further by encouraging participation of local finance officials in the programs sponsored by State municipal leagues and professional associations such as the Municipal Finance Officers Association.

POSSIBLE STATE ACTION

The mechanics of the bond market are exceedingly complex, and the public interest can best be protected by technically competent specialists experienced in its operations. Small and medium size municipalities cannot efficiently retain such specialists on their staffs. The need for State assistance to the Nation's municipalities, therefore, is generally recognized. A few States, notable examples being New Jersey, North Carolina, and Tennessee, have established effective programs of assistance in debt management.[35] Most States, however, have made no real constructive effort to provide small municipalities with much needed guidance in this field.[36] Various groups such as the National League of Cities, the Council of State Governments, and the Advisory Commission on Intergovernmental Relations have recommended for several years State enactment of legislation designed to improve local credit through positive programs of assistance in debt management practices. Such legislation would provide for modernization and codification of debt laws to remove obsolete restrictions imposed upon municipal governments, and for the establishment of an adequately staffed and financed agency to assist municipalities in the marketing of municipal bond issues. Such an agency would be empowered to—

1. Establish standard classifications and procedures for reporting essential minimum finance data, including current and historical records of revenues by source, expenditures by function and character, assessed valuation and true value of taxable property, tax rates, tax collections, and delinquencies, and debt outstanding and retired.

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[33] William L. Frederick and Marilyn Gittell, "State Technical Assistance to Local Governments" (Chicago: the Council of State Governments, 1962), pp. 41–45.
[34] Ibid., pp. 38–41.
[35] In addition to the State previously discussed, Delaware and Kentucky have established agencies to assist municipalities market their securities.
[36] Correspondence from officials in Alabama, Arizona, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Massachusetts, Mississippi, Montana, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, and Washington indicates that these States have no established agencies responsible for providing positive assistance on a regular basis to municipalities attempting to market bond issues.