

Cities Bulletin e-newsletter

April 28, 2025 | Issue 16

Click on the following links to read the articles in an accessible format:

<u>Senate Committee To Consider Scaled-Back Language Limiting Local Authority on Residential Development</u>

With Three Weeks Left in Session, Legislature Works To Pass State Budget

Help Select the 2025 League Board of Directors

Act Now: LMC Awards Deadline Extended to April 30

Join LMC for a Free Five-Day Learning Challenge Starting May 12

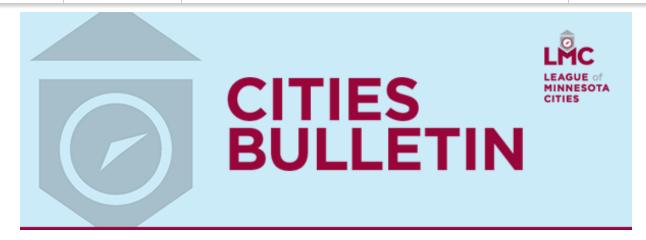
On the City Spot Blog: Don't Miss the April 30 Deadline to File Your ARPA Report

LMC Annual Conference Early Bird Registration Closes Friday

Police Chiefs: Join LMCIT and Benchmark Analytics for a Free Webinar on May 14

Grants Available for Outdoor Heritage, Public Art, and More

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April 28, 2025 | Issue 16

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Senate Committee To Consider Scaled-Back Language Limiting Local Authority on Residential Development

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In Other News

With Three Weeks Left in Session, Legislature Works To Pass State Budget

The House and Senate passed their first budget bills off the floor this week, and leaders met to determine joint targets.

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The League is seeking city officials to serve on the Nominating Committee.

More Information and Resources

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Featured Events

5-Day Challenge:
Welcoming and
Engaged Cities
May 12 — virtual

Free Webinar: 2025

iMPACT Research Brief:

Latest Insights From

Top-Performing

Agencies

May 14 — virtual

Managing Difficult
Conversations With
Constituents, a Braver
Angels Workshop
Various dates and
locations

2025 LMC Annual
Conference
June 25-27 — Duluth

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Non-League Events

Quick Links

Archive of Previous Issues

Latest News

City Jobs

Jobs with LMC

Current Grant Opportunities

Wanted/For Sale/RFP Announcements in the LMC Marketplace

Weekly 4M Fund Rates (Minnesota Municipal Money Market Fund)

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- For legislative questions: Contact IGR Staff
- For editorial or other Cities Bulletin questions: Contact Rachel Kats, Publications & Web Editor (651) 215-4032 or (800) 925-1122; rkats@lmc.org

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Senate Committee To Consider Scaled-Back Language Limiting Local Authority on Residential Development

April 28, 2025

The proposed language would require administrative approvals for all multifamily development, limit parking minimums, prohibit certain aesthetic standards, and regulate homeowners associations.

On May 1, the <u>Senate State and Local Government Committee</u> is expected to consider a proposal that includes four provisions previously included in a <u>suite of zoning and land use reform bills</u>. Those bills stalled earlier in this session in the <u>House Elections Finance and Government Operations Committee</u> and Senate State and Local Government Committee.

The language is expected to be offered by <u>Sen. Lindsey Port</u> (DFL-Burnsville) as a delete-everything amendment to replace the language in <u>SF 2229</u>. The League received a copy of the proposed language.

View the proposed delete-everything amendment to SF 2229 (pdf).

The language would impact all of Minnesota's 856 cities and includes the following provisions:

- Requires cities to establish and follow an administrative review and approval process for all residential developments, with no more than two "community meetings" (public hearings would still be prohibited) prior to approval.
- Prohibits cities from imposing residential design standards beyond the state building code for all residential development including large multifamily buildings, specifically regarding exterior materials, such as siding, shutters, columns, gables, decks, balconies, porches, garage size, roof pitch, and minimum number and placement of windows.
- Prohibits cities from conditioning the approval of a residential building permit, conditional use permits, subdivision developments, or planned unit development on the creation of a homeowners association or requiring services, features, or common property that would necessitate one.
- Prohibits cities from imposing minimum parking requirements on all residential developments that mandate more than one parking space.

Your next step

If advanced by the Senate State and Local Government Committee, the language could be included in an omnibus bill, move forward as a standalone provision, or be a vehicle for more restrictive language on zoning and land use reform later in the legislative process. Cities are

encouraged to contact their senators, especially if they serve on the Senate State and Local Government Committee.

Read more news articles.

Your LMC Resource

Daniel Lightfoot

IGR Representative & Federal Relations Manager

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With Three Weeks Left in Session, Legislature Works To Pass State Budget

April 28, 2025

The House and Senate passed their first budget bills off the floor this week, and leaders met to determine joint targets.

With three weeks remaining in the 2025 legislative session, much of the work to pass the state's two-year budget is still ahead. The <u>Senate Finance Committee</u> and the <u>House Ways and Means Committee</u> advanced several budget bills last week, sending them to their respective chambers' floors for votes in the coming days. Once passed in each body, the conference committee process can begin.

So far, the House passed agriculture, legacy, and judiciary finance bills, and the Senate passed its housing, commerce, veterans, and state government finance bills.

- Read more about the House omnibus bills.
- Read more about the Senate budget and omnibus bills.

The House and Senate taxes and capital investment committees have yet to release their omnibus bills. The House tax proposal is expected during the week of April 28, with the Senate's to follow shortly after.

Currently, there are significant differences between the House and Senate bills — particularly in their overall spending. Legislative leaders and Gov. Tim Walz are meeting to determine the final budget target for each issue area.

The League continues to track individual finance and policy omnibus bills. At this stage, many budget bills remain incomplete and may require further negotiations — or leadership intervention — to resolve outstanding issues.

Read more news articles.

Your LMC Resource

Beth Johnston

Intergovernmental Relations Representative

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Help Select the 2025 League Board of Directors

April 28, 2025

The League is seeking city officials to serve on the Nominating Committee.

Do you want to have an important role in the selection of new members for the 2025 League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) Board of Directors? If so, apply by 5 p.m. on **May 30** to be part of the Nominating Committee that interviews and recommends Board candidates.

Eligibility

The Nominating Committee is made up of 8-12 individuals, consisting of both elected and appointed city officials, from throughout the state. Any city official interested in serving is encouraged to apply. LMC President Justin Miller, Lakeville city administrator, will choose committee appointees by June 6.

Selection process and dates

Once the Nominating Committee has been selected and members have been notified, there will be a conference call to provide information on the selection process and guidelines for conducting the Board candidate interviews, deliberations, and decision-making steps. The meeting will be held virtually on June 17 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

If you are providing a letter of reference for an individual who plans on applying to the Board of Directors, we ask that you refrain from applying to be on the Nominating Committee. This ensures that no conflicts of interest arise during the process.

The interview schedule will be finalized after the Board application deadline of June 6. The committee will convene in-person in Duluth on the morning of June 24 to interview candidates for the positions of president, first vice president, second vice president, and four director positions. The committee's recommendations will then be presented to the League's membership at the LMC Annual Conference/business meeting on June 26.

How to apply

City officials interested in serving on the Nominating Committee should contact Kellie Sundheim, LMC executive assistant, by 5 p.m. on **May 30** at (651) 281-1214 or ksundheim@lmc.org. If you have questions about the Nominating Committee or the process for selecting Board candidates, reach out to Kellie or LMC Executive Director Luke Fischer at (651) 281-1279 or lfischer@lmc.org.

Read more news articles.

Your LMC Resource

Kellie Sundheim

Executive Assistant

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LMC Awards

DEADLINE EXTENSION: The 2025 LMC Awards Program is now open for submissions until Wednesday, April 30!

The League each year honors the special achievements of cities and city leaders with the City of Excellence Awards, C.C. Ludwig Award, James F. Miller Leadership Award, and Sustainable City Award.

About City of Excellence Awards

The City of Excellence Awards recognize cities for outstanding work. Awards are given in three population categories and in one special topical category, which is different each year. The 2025 Topical Category is Successful Collaboration Among Local Governments.

Read more about the City of Excellence Awards

About the Individual Awards

The C.C. Ludwig Award recognizes elected officials who have made significant contributions to Minnesota city government. Similarly, the James F. Miller Leadership Award honors appointed city officials who have gone above and beyond the call of duty for their city and all Minnesota cities. Finally, the Emerging Leader Award is presented in recognition and encouragement of elected and appointed officials who are early in their service to municipal government.

Learn more about the individual awards

About the Sustainable City Award

Cities currently participating in the Minnesota GreenStep Cities program are eligible for the League of Minnesota Cities Sustainable City Award.

Learn more about the Sustainable City Award

Your LMC Resource

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Final Week to File Your ARPA Report: Don't Miss the April 30 Deadline!

April 23, 2025

There's still time to file your city's Project and Expenditure Report—here's what you need to know.

April 30, 2025, is the deadline for cities to submit their American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Project and Expenditure Report. If your city received ARPA funds, you're required to file—even if all funds were already spent and reported in previous years.

This report covers activity between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025. With just a week to go, now is the time to log into the reporting portal, gather your documentation, and ensure everything is in order. The



process can feel complex, but the League of Minnesota Cities is here to provide helpful resources that will walk you through the final steps.

Spent and Reported ARPA Funds in a Previous Year? You Still Need to File

Cities that have already spent and reported all ARPA funds must still file a report this year. In these cases, you'll simply report zero current period obligations and zero current period expenditures, certify, and submit. However, your total cumulative obligations and expenditures should equal the full ARPA amount allocated to your city.

Skipping the report—even if you have nothing new to report—could put your city out of compliance with federal requirements.

The Obligation Deadline Has Passed

In addition to the reporting requirements, cities were required to obligate their ARPA funds by December 31, 2024. Any funds not contractually committed by that date must be returned to the U.S. Treasury Department.

If your city had unobligated funds as of the deadline, it's important to review your financial records and prepare for any necessary returns. The <u>U.S. Treasury's Updated FAQs</u> offer guidance on what qualifies as an obligation under federal standards.

Get Help from the League This Week

The League is once again offering ARPA reporting office hours to help cities get over the finish line. During these Zoom sessions, League staff will walk through a demonstration of the reporting process and will be available to answer your questions one-on-one in real time—no registration required.

All you need to do is click the meeting link, wait in the queue, and bring your questions. To make the most of your time, log in to the **reporting portal via Login.gov** before joining the call and have any relevant information ready.

View the League's website for the full schedule of remaining office hours this week.

Don't Know Where to Start? Use These Tools

If you're new to the process or need a refresher, the <u>National League of Cities (NLC) has</u> <u>created a 10-minute step-by-step video guide to walk you through the filing process</u>. It's a quick, practical resource that helps you confidently navigate the Treasury's reporting portal.

The League also has a comprehensive <u>ARPA Reporting FAQ page</u> covering everything from NEU reporting rules to documentation requirements.

What You Need to Know

- Deadline: The ARPA Project and Expenditure Report is due April 30, 2025.
- **Reporting Period**: Covers activity from April 1, 2024 March 31, 2025.
- **Who Must File**: All cities that received ARPA funds, even if all spending was reported on a previously filed Project and Expenditure Report.
- **Obligation Deadline**: December 31, 2024, was the final date to obligate funds.
- Help Available: Join League office hours or check out video tutorials and FAQs online.

Feeling overwhelmed by the process? Don't forget: you're not alone! The League is here to help your city meet this federal requirement before time runs out!



Current Grant Opportunities

Outdoor Heritage Fund Grants

The Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council is accepting applications for Outdoor Heritage Fund Grants, and estimates that more than \$150 million is available to support habitat work.

Eligibility for these grants includes local units of government, nonprofit organizations, watershed districts, etc. The key is that the monies are dedicated for use in projects that "protect, restore, and enhance habitat for fish, game, and wildlife."

Applications are due May 23.

Learn more and apply for Outdoor Heritage funds.

Fiscal Year 2026 Cultural Expression Grants

Application materials are now available for the Cultural Expression grant program. <u>Cultural Expression</u> provides project grants to support activities that share, explore, pass on, express, or celebrate culture through the arts. Culture may be defined by a common ethnicity, tribal affiliation, geographic or regional identity, or language. Traditional and contemporary forms of cultural expression may be funded in this program. Funds could be used to support practicing a cultural art form; presenting cultural festivals, community celebrations, performances, media or exhibitions; offering demonstrations, etc. Funds could also be used to deepen or pass on cultural traditions through apprenticeships or documentation.

Applicants may request between \$5,000 – \$35,000. Details, including full program guidelines, eligibility, and resources for applicants can be found on the <u>Cultural Expression program page</u>. The application deadline is **June 6**.

Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grants

There is \$8 million available for the Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grants to support cities, counties, and tribal nations in creating sites for workforce and affordable housing in Greater Minnesota.

Grant funds can be used to cover up to 50% of capital costs of physical public infrastructure necessary to support a qualifying housing development. This may include sewers, water supply systems, utility extensions, streets and more, necessary to support single-family, multifamily, homeownership and rental housing development.

Grants are generally limited to:

- \$40,000 per lot for one to four units.
- \$180,000 per lot for multifamily housing (five or more units/building).
- \$60,000 per manufactured housing lot.
- No more than \$500,000 to any grantee or project over a two-year period.

Applicants' matching funds may include in-kind contributions, such as donation of land.

For additional details on the program, please review the program guide.

Learn more and apply for Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grants.

Arts Experiences Grant Program

<u>Arts Experiences</u> through the Minnesota State Arts Board provides project grants that individuals and organizations, including local governments, can use to offer arts activities that are meaningful for Minnesota residents and communities. Funds may be used for a variety of arts projects such as creating and/or presenting concerts, plays, tours, exhibitions, arts festivals, public art, or other kinds of arts programming that engages Minnesota audiences and participants.

Applicants may request between \$5,000-\$35,000. The deadline to apply is **May 2**.

Potential applicants are encouraged to review all application materials and resources on the program page before beginning an application.

Learn more and apply for an Arts Experiences grant.

Minnesota SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Software Incentive

The Minnesota Department of Commerce Division of Energy Resources requests applications for the SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Software Incentive Program. The purpose of this program is to provide technical assistance and financial incentives to local units of government that issue permits for residential solar projects and solar plus energy storage systems by incentivizing a permitting authority to adopt the SolarAPP+ software to standardize, automate, and streamline the review and permitting process.

The Department of Commerce will administer \$2 million in incentives to eligible jurisdictions across Minnesota, with incentives ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Eligible applicants include local units of governments with authority to issue permits for residential solar projects and solar plus energy storage system projects.

Applications must be submitted through the grant interface website, Minnesota Department of Commerce's online grant interface website. The Request for Proposals (RFP) will have detailed information and application questions as well as required forms and reference materials. It will be available for download on the Department's RFP website beginning Feb. 28 and remain available until **June 30, 2028**, or until fully expended. Instructions for submitting applications are detailed in the RFP.

<u>Learn more and apply for the Solar Permitting Incentive Program.</u>

Community Innovation grants

The Bush Foundation's Community Innovation (CI) grant program is a flexible program that invests in great ideas and the people who power them across our region. The program aims to:

- Develop, test, and spread great ideas.
- Inspire, equip, and connect leaders.

Learn more and apply for a CI grant.

Establish a Local Housing Trust Fund With Help From the Minnesota Housing Partnership

The Minnesota Housing Partnership (MHP) is offering free assistance to rural communities to establish Local Housing Trust Funds (LHTF). Funds can be used for education on Local Housing Trust Funds, as well as implementation of LHTF programs and community engagement activities.

In 2023, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$4.8 million to a <u>Local Housing Trust Fund</u> (<u>LHTF</u>) <u>State Match Program</u>; with \$1 million appropriated in a prior year, available funds for the state match program total \$5.8 million. An application for state match funds is likely to be released in late summer or early fall.

<u>Learn more and apply for free technical assistance from MHP to establish or implement your LHTF.</u>

MNOSHA WSC: Safety Grant Program

The Safety Grant Program awards funds up to \$10,000 to qualifying employers for projects designed to reduce the risk of injury and illness to their workers.

To qualify, an employer must meet several conditions, including but not limited to:

- Having been in business for at least two years.
- Having at least one employee to create the employer/employee relationship.
- Having workers' compensation insurance.
- Having had an on-site hazard survey conducted by a qualified safety professional and a
 written report of the findings and recommendations to reduce the risk of injury or illness to
 employees.
- Having the knowledge and experience to complete the project and is committed to its implementation.
- Being able to complete the project within 120 days of a fully executed contract.

To qualify, the project must be supported by all public entities involved and comply with federal, state, and local regulations where applicable.

Businesses that are the current focus of the <u>Minnesota OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation</u> <u>strategic plan</u> will be given added priority. If your grant is approved, you will be notified in

writing of the specific approval. Whether we approve your grant application or not, in no way diminishes, delays, or absolves you of any obligation to abate safety and health hazards. When a project is complete, the applicant must submit a certificate of completion form, with invoices and proof of payment, to the grants administrator, to initiate issuance of the grant. An employer that has received a grant for a particular worksite will not be eligible to receive another grant for that worksite during the two years after the date of their award.

Learn more and apply to the MNOSHA WSC: Safety Grant Program.

Solar on Public Buildings Grant Program

The Solar on Public Buildings Grant Program will equip cities, towns, counties, and other local governments and Tribal Nations to lower utilities costs, increase energy independence, expand the clean energy workforce, and take essential action to address climate change.

\$4.3 million in state funding will be distributed to local governments to build solar arrays (system size up to 40 kilowatts) across Xcel Energy territory in Minnesota. These grants can be paired with federal clean energy tax credits now available to local governments.

Learn more and apply for Solar on Public Buildings Grant Program funding.

Green and Resilient Retrofit Program (GRRP)

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Green and Resilient Retrofit Program (GRRP) provides loan and grant funding to deliver energy efficiency and electrification improvements to HUD-assisted housing, which can fund retrofitting properties up to \$40,000-\$80,000 per unit. HUD is accepting applications on a rolling basis, two will be occurring in 2024. Funded under the Inflation Reduction Act, the GRRP is the first HUD program to invest simultaneously in energy efficiency, greenhouse gas emissions reductions, energy generation, and climate resilience strategies specifically in HUD-assisted multifamily housing.

Learn more and apply for GRRP funding.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Technical Assistance Grants

The Minnesota Department of Transportation (MNDOT) IIJA Technical Assistance Grant Program is now open. \$2 Million in state funds is available to qualifying local units of government and tribal governments that seek to submit an application for a federal discretionary grant for a transportation purposes.

State technical assistance funds can be used to hire a consultant for identification of available grants, grant writing, analysis, data collection, technical review, legal interpretations, planning, pre-engineering, application finalization, and similar activities. Learn more and apply for an IIJA Technical Assistance Grant.

Learn more and apply for a IIJA Technical Assistance grant.

Cybersecurity Grant Program Now Available Statewide

The state's IT agency, Minnesota IT Services (MNIT), in partnership with the <u>Minnesota Cybersecurity Task Force</u> recently released the <u>Whole-of-State Cybersecurity Plan</u> that will be used to implement \$23.5 million of funding from the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program and the Minnesota Legislature.

Eligibility

All state and local government entities are eligible to participate in the SLCGP, including:

- A county, municipality, city, town, township, local public authority, school district, special district, intrastate district, council of governments, regional or interstate government entity, or agency or instrumentality of a local government.
- Authorized Tribal governments and organizations.
- A rural community, unincorporated town or village, or other public entity.

How to get involved

- Visit MNIT's website for more information <u>about the plan</u>, <u>how to participate</u>, and who to contact if you have questions or need help.
- You can also <u>sign up to receive news and updates</u> about the Whole-of-Security Plan and the SLCGP.
- If your organization is ready to get started, complete the <u>Minnesota Whole-of-State survey</u> for <u>SLCGP participants</u>.

Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Program

Housing and Urban Development (HUD) is accepting requests for technical assistance for the Thriving Communities technical assistance program. This funding will help local governments ensure housing needs are considered as part of their infrastructure plans. To be eligible, jurisdictions must be a unit of general local government that is receiving federal transportation funding to support a project that coordinates transportation and housing plans, programs, or investments to benefit residents and businesses located in a disadvantaged community. Priority will be given to jurisdictions with populations of less than 250,000 people, as well as to those receiving certain Department of Transportation competitive funds. Requests will be reviewed as they are received, on a rolling basis, beginning on March 15.

Learn more about the interagency Thriving Communities technical assistance program

Residential Retrofits for Energy Equity: Energy Upgrades for Affordable Housing

Residential Retrofits for Energy Equity (R2E2) will provide deep technical assistance to state, local, and tribal governments as well as community-based organizations to jumpstart energy upgrades for single family and multifamily affordable housing, especially in frontline communities. These retrofits will lower utility bills, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve

residents' health, create good-paying local jobs, and help mitigate racial inequity. R2E2 will kick off with training sessions in January for state, local, and community teams on scaling up building energy retrofits and leveraging the unprecedented federal funding available from COVID-19 relief programs, the bipartisan infrastructure law, the Inflation Reduction Act, and other sources. R2E2 is a partnership of the American Council for Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE), Elevate, Emerald Cities Collaborative, and HR&A Advisors, with People's Climate Innovation Center advising on centering equity in the project and its outcomes and on facilitating community-driven planning processes.

Learn more about Residential Retrofits for Energy Equity

Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program for Rural Areas

Low-interest direct loans, grants, or a combination of the two are available to develop essential community facilities (not including private, commercial, or business undertakings) in rural areas through the Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant program. The program is offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development. Funds can be used to purchase, construct, and/or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment, and pay related project expenses. Rural areas, including cities, villages, townships, and federally recognized tribal lands, with no more than 20,000 residents according to the latest <u>U.S. Census data</u>, are eligible for this program. Applications for this program are accepted year-round.

Learn more about the Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant program

Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program

The Community Heart & Soul Seed Grant Program provides \$10,000 in startup funding for resident-driven groups in small cities and towns to implement the Community Heart & Soul model. Community Heart & Soul engages a motivated and dedicated group of individuals to help your town identify what matters most. The grant program is specifically designed for small cities and towns with populations of 2,500 to 30,000. Grant funding requires a \$10,000 cash match from the participating municipality or a partnering organization.

Learn more and apply for a Community Heart & Soul Grant

Your LMC Resource

Research & Information Service staff members are ready to help you apply their broad knowledge to the issues you're dealing with today.

Access online form to submit a question, or call us: (651) 281-1200 or (800) 925-1122