



## Cities Bulletin e-newsletter

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## [House Leaders Reach Agreement, Convene for First Time in 2025](#)

The agreement grants Republicans control of the Minnesota House of Representatives until at least a March special election and appoints Rep. Lisa Demuth the Speaker of the House for the biennium.

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An introductory overview of the new state leave mandate will be hosted by the Department of Employment and Economic Development.

#### [Executive Orders FAQs: What Cities Need To Know](#)

President Donald Trump's executive orders on funding, policing, immigration, DEI, and hiring may affect cities, and the League has convened leaders to monitor and assess their impact.

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[City Spot Blog: The 2025 LMC Awards Program — Celebrating Excellence in Minnesota Cities](#)

[Reserve Your Spot at City Day on the Hill](#)

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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](mailto:rkats@lmc.org)

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League of Minnesota Cities, 145 University Ave. W, Saint Paul, MN 55103-2044  
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# House Leaders Reach Agreement, Convene for First Time in 2025

February 10, 2025

**The agreement grants Republicans control of the Minnesota House of Representatives until at least a March special election and appoints Rep. Lisa Demuth the Speaker of the House for the biennium.**

A partisan standoff in the Minnesota House of Representatives was resolved by caucus leaders on Feb. 5 and the body officially convened for the first time on Feb. 6, just over three weeks after the constitutional beginning of the 2025 legislative session.

Although the November 2024 election yielded a 67-67 tie between House Republicans and Democratic Farmer Labor (DFL) members, the membership was modified to a 67-66 split after a legal challenge over the residency of the DFL winner for District 40B (Roseville) led to the elected candidate being deemed ineligible to serve. As a result, the session began with 67 Republicans and 66 DFLers.

DFL legislators had been staying away from the Capitol, denying the 68-member quorum the body needs to conduct business. They refused to return until they had assurances of a power-sharing arrangement for the remainder of the biennium and an agreement that Republicans won't vote to refuse to seat [Rep. Brad Tabke](#) (DFL-Shakopee) who won by 14 votes in a recount but faced a legal challenge over 20 absentee ballots being discarded. A judge ruled that Rep. Tabke is the winner of the race and may serve as the state representative for his district.

## Special election called

On Feb. 5, [Gov. Tim Walz](#) issued a [writ of special election](#) that sets Tuesday, March 11 as the date for a special election to fill the vacant District 40B House seat. The district is expected to remain in DFL hands, producing a 67-67 tie in House membership once the new member is sworn in.

## Temporary and long-term power-sharing agreement reached

The stalemate ended when Republican Leader [Rep. Lisa Demuth](#) (R-Cold Spring) and DFL Leader [Rep. Melissa Hortman](#) (DFL-Brooklyn Park) agreed on a plan for the remainder of the biennium. Under the agreement, which was adopted by the full House when they convened with a quorum on Feb. 6, Republicans elected Rep. Demuth as Speaker of the House, a position she or another Republican will hold for the remainder of the biennium if Republicans have a majority or the membership of the body is tied. The Republican caucus will control House committees while they have a 67-66 advantage. Republicans will also have a one-seat voting advantage on committees.

[View the power-sharing agreement \(pdf\).](#)

If the House returns to a 67-67 tie after the special election in District 40B, committees will be co-chaired by DFLers and Republicans and there will be an equal number of DFLers and Republicans on each committee. At that point, a bipartisan vote will be required to advance a bill out of committee. House committees are expected to start meeting Feb. 10.

## Session underway

The agreement means the Senate and House are both conducting business for the first time since the 2025 session began on Jan. 14. This is a welcome sign for stakeholders who want to advance legislation. It's also a critical step during a state budget-setting year.

[Read more news articles.](#)

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Your LMC Resource

Anne Finn

IGR Director

(651) 281-1263 or (800) 925-1122

[afinn@lmc.org](mailto:afinn@lmc.org)

# Senate Bill Would Reduce City Cost Participation in Trunk Highway Projects

February 10, 2025

**The League-supported measure would prohibit the Minnesota Department of Transportation from requiring a local government to pay for project costs within a trunk highway right-of-way.**

A bill heard in the [Senate Transportation Committee](#) on Feb. 5 would prohibit the [Minnesota Department of Transportation](#) (MnDOT) from requiring a local government

to pay for project costs within trunk a highway right-of-way, including utility relocation costs, regardless of facility ownership. The measure, [SF 285](#) authored by [Sen. John Jasinski](#) (R-Faribault), was discussed and laid over for possible inclusion in an omnibus transportation funding package.

## Testimony and background

Richfield Mayor Mary Supple testified in favor of the bill on behalf of the League, while Elk River's public works director and chief engineer spoke in support as a representative of the City Engineers Association of Minnesota.

The bill would address challenges experienced by cities of all sizes, which face steep cost share obligations when MnDOT engages in trunk highway improvements within city limits. The [current MnDOT cost participation policy](#) forces local governments to contribute to trunk highway projects regardless of timing or ability to pay. Cities have authority withhold [municipal consent](#), the process MnDOT follows for municipal approval of final layout for a project on a trunk highway, but trunk highway projects are typically regional in nature and require cooperation by multiple local governments.

Cities facing cost participation obligations often shift funds from other priorities such as street maintenance on their own systems. The current system puts additional pressure on local budgets and property taxpayers.

As drafted, the bill has a blank appropriation. Legislators and stakeholders understand the bill would need to be funded, and the price tag could be prohibitive for the state. The measure will not likely be revisited until budget targets and priorities are negotiated.

## Your next step

City leaders are encouraged to stay informed about transportation fundings proposals and other legislative developments by subscribing to the [Cities Bulletin](#) e-newsletter and reading [the latest news](#) on the League's website.

[Read more news articles.](#)

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Your LMC Resource

Anne Finn

IGR Director

(651) 281-1263 or (800) 925-1122

[afinn@lmc.org](mailto:afinn@lmc.org)



# DEED To Host Minnesota Paid Leave Webinar on Feb. 12

February 10, 2025

**An introductory overview of the new state leave mandate will be hosted by the Department of Employment and Economic Development.**

The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) will host an online webinar on Feb. 12 from 12-1 p.m. to provide an overview of the Minnesota Paid Leave program. Those interested can receive a calendar invitation from DEED by [registering on the Minnesota Paid Leave website](#).

The webinar will cover introductory topics related to the new program, including:

- Which employees will be covered.
- The differences between family leave and medical leave.
- Employers' responsibilities.
- Tools and resources available for employers as they prepare for implementation.

Passed into law in 2023 and further modified in 2024, the Minnesota Paid Leave program will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2026, with the first quarterly premiums due in April 2026. DEED has completed a public comment period on the initial proposed rules, which are expected to be finalized in the near future. The program is also widely anticipated to be the focus of a lot of discussion at the Capitol throughout the 2025 legislative session.

[Read more news articles.](#)

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Your LMC Resource

Owen Wirth

Intergovernmental Relations Representative

(651) 281-1224

[owirth@lmc.org](mailto:owirth@lmc.org)

# Executive Orders and Actions Impacting Cities

Published: February 1, 2025

*Updated Feb. 6, 2025*

Since President Trump took office on Jan. 20, several executive orders have been issued addressing topics such as federal funding, policing, immigration, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, and hiring practices. Many of these actions directly impact cities and communities in various ways.

The League has assembled a team of leaders from across our organization to monitor, assess, and analyze these executive orders. We are also working with partner organizations including the National League of Cities, International Municipal Lawyers Association, and others to share information and ensure our responses are as informed as possible.

## Get answers to FAQs regarding executive orders and actions

The following frequently asked questions (FAQs) are designed to provide information to cities about executive orders covering several topics. The League will continue to update this information as necessary.

### Immigration

President Trump has adopted executive orders related to immigration. The [Protecting the American People Against Invasion order](#) has received national attention and could have significant impact on cities.

The order seeks to achieve the “total and efficient” enforcement of immigration laws by:

- The establishment of Homeland Security Task Forces (HSTFs) in all states.
- Blocking sanctuary cities from receiving federal funds.
- Blocking federal funding to non-governmental organizations providing services directly or indirectly to people living in the country illegally.

- Stopping public benefits to people living in the country illegally.

## What is a Homeland Security Task Force (HSTF)?

+

HSTFs are to be established by the U.S. Attorney General and Secretary of Homeland Security and include representation from other federal agencies with law enforcement officers, or agencies with the ability to provide logistics, intelligence, and operational support. In addition, HSTFs are to include representation from relevant state and local law enforcement agencies.

As stated in President Trump's order (*Protecting the American People Against Invasion*), the objective of each HSTF is to "end the presence of criminal cartels, foreign gangs, and transnational criminal organizations throughout the United States, dismantle cross-border human smuggling and trafficking networks, end the scourge of human smuggling and trafficking, with a particular focus on such offenses involving children, and ensure the use of all available law enforcement tools to faithfully execute the immigration laws of the United States."

## Is there training available for law enforcement?

+

Yes, law enforcement members of LMCIT's PATROL — Peace officer Accredited TRaining OnLine program, can learn about immigration law and their responsibilities as an officer. This updated course will be available in early 2025. [Read more about the PATROL program.](#)

## What is a sanctuary city?

+

There is no specific statutory definition of sanctuary city. Sanctuary cities generally limit their cooperation with federal immigration officials by adopting ordinances or policies that limit the use of city resources available to aid immigration officials in investigating federal

immigration violations. Regardless, local law enforcement agencies still enforce state and local criminal laws.

How many sanctuary cities are in Minnesota?

+

The League does not track this data.

## Diversity, equity, and inclusion programs

President Trump issued several executive orders related to diversity, equity, and inclusion and accessibility (DEI/DEIA) programs including, *Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity* and *Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing*. Some of the key points of these orders include:

- Requiring all federal contracts or grants to include terms mandating that recipients comply with all federal antidiscrimination laws and certify that they do not operate any programs promoting DEI that violate any applicable federal antidiscrimination laws.
- Encouraging the private sector to end DEI discrimination and preferences.
- Excising references to DEI and DEIA principles from federal contracting, grants, and financial assistance.
- Ending equity related grants or contracts and all DEI performance requirements for contractors and grantees.

Can Minnesota cities continue their DEI programs?

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The executive order does not require cities to discontinue current DEI programs. However, cities should stay tuned to determine what, if any, effect DEI programs will have on federal grants and assistance. In addition, President Trump's order requires the creation of a report, within 120 days of the order, containing recommendations for enforcing federal civil rights laws and taking other appropriate measures to encourage the "private sector to end illegal discrimination and preferences, including DEI." It is unclear what, if any, affect

this report will have on cities. It is always important to work with your city attorney if review or revision to an individual city's program is being contemplated.

How many Minnesota cities have DEI programs?

+

The League does not track this data.

## Personnel management

Do any of President Trump's executive orders apply to our city's workforce policies and procedures?

Generally, the executive orders do not apply to local policies. However, cities should review any federal grants and assistance they receive to determine if local policies and procedures will jeopardize those funds. It is always important to work with your city attorney if review or revision to an individual city's policies or procedures is being contemplated.

## Federal funding

On Jan. 27, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) issued a memo requesting that agencies temporarily pause, to the extent permitted by law, grant, loan, or federal financial assistance programs that are implicated by the President's executive orders. This memo was rescinded Jan. 29, but White House sources say the pause on funding is still in effect. In addition, a federal court has issued a temporary restraining order which may prevent a pause. It is unclear how the executive branch will respond to the temporary restraining order. If your city is experiencing a delay in receiving federal funds, please let us know by emailing [research@lmc.org](mailto:research@lmc.org).

What programs and grants are paused right now?

+

According to [guidance from the Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\)](#), only programs implicated by President Trump's executive orders are subject to the pause. The executive orders listed in OMB memo are:

- *Protecting the American People Against Invasion.*
- *Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid.*
- *Putting America First in International Environmental Agreements.*

- *Unleashing American Energy.*
- *Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing.*
- *Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government.*
- *Enforcing the Hyde Amendment.*

Any program that provides direct benefits to individuals is not subject to the pause. While the OMB memo has been rescinded, it appears the pauses may continue based on other guidance.

## How long is the federal pause set to last?

+

The initial Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memo required federal agencies to report back by Feb. 10. With the rescission of the memo, there is no clear timeline.

## Are there legal challenges to this executive order? (Updated Feb. 6, 2025)

+

Yes. Almost immediately, many stakeholders turned to the courts to seek clarity. On Jan. 28, a federal judge temporarily blocked the federal funding pause from going into effect until Feb. 3. It is anticipated there will be many legal challenges for the federal courts to consider in the coming days and weeks. In addition, a coalition of 23 state attorneys general, including Minnesota's, filed a lawsuit in a Rhode Island court seeking to stop the implementation of any funding pauses authorized by the executive orders.

On Jan. 31, the Federal District Court of Rhode Island issued a temporary restraining order against the federal government. The Court's order noted that the Federal Government "shall not pause, freeze, impede, block, cancel, or terminate its compliance with award and obligations to provide federal financial assistance to the States, and ... shall not impede the States' access to such awards and obligations, except based on the applicable authorizing statutes, regulations and terms."

## What programs are excluded from the pause?

+

That is not entirely clear. An OMB memo, which was later rescinded, notes that any program that provides direct benefits to Americans is explicitly excluded from the pause and exempted from this review process. The White House has said Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, and SNAP will continue without pause and funds for small businesses,

farmers, Pell grants, Head Start, rental assistance, and other similar programs will not be paused.

## Are federal executive agencies pausing disbursement of funds appropriated by Biden-era energy, environmental, and infrastructure programs? (Updated Feb. 6, 2025) +

Through the order, *Initial Rescissions of Harmful Executive Orders and Actions*, the Biden-era executive order *Implementation of the Infrastructure and Jobs Act*, has been revoked. The initial Office of Management and Budget (OMB) memo directed federal agencies to immediately pause the disbursement of funds appropriated through the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. With the rescission of the OMB memo, and the temporary restraining order issued on Jan. 31, it is unclear how these funds will be affected.

## Can federal agencies make an exception? +

According to the initial memo issued by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), OMB may grant exceptions allowing federal agencies to issue new awards or take other actions on a case-by-case basis. With the rescission of the OMB memo, it remains unclear whether exceptions will be made.

## What are some best practices if a city thinks a project may be impacted by the federal funding freeze? +

The funding pause may cause delays or cancellations of projects and may result in economic uncertainty, and impact both future and local projects already underway. Cities should carefully review their grant agreements for payment obligations. Cities that haven't signed grant agreements should reach out to the relevant agencies and expect that responses will vary by program. For new contracts that are contingent upon the city's receipt of anticipated federal funding, cities should consider including a provision that if such funding is not received, is reduced, or is otherwise unavailable for any reason beyond the city's control, the city may, upon written notice to the other party, suspend performance of or terminate the contract, in whole or in part, without liability or penalty.

Legal challenges both for project delays and the broader constitutional implications should be expected. And finally, cities should inform their agency contacts about any disruptions,

and document the related costs or losses (and share this with LMC and your members of Congress).

Will the executive orders affect any federal funds our city is receiving as part of a transportation project? (Added Feb. 6, 2025)

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Through a memo released by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), DOT staff is directed to identify and eliminate all orders, directives, rules, regulations, notices, guidance documents, funding agreements, programs and policy statements, or portion thereof, adopted during President Biden's term which reference or relate in any way to climate change, "greenhouse gas" emissions, racial equity, gender identity, "diversity, equity, and inclusion" goals, environmental justice, or the Justice 40 Initiative. It is unclear what, if any, affect this memo will have on ongoing funding agreements with DOT.

In addition, the DOT Secretary issued an order to ensure that all DOT grants, loans, contracts and DOT-supported or assisted state contracts meet specific requirements. Among other requirements, the DOT Secretary's order provides that DOT programs, including grants, loan and contracts, shall not be used to "further local political objectives or for projects and goals that are purely local in nature and unrelated to a proper Federal interest."

The order provides that DOT programs, including loans, grants, and contracts shall prioritize projects and goals that:

- Utilize user-pay models.
- Direct funding to local opportunity zones.
- To the extent practicable, mitigate the unique impacts of DOT activities on families and family-specific difficulties, such as the accessibility of transportation to families with young children and give preference to communities with marriage and birth rates higher than the national average.
- Prohibit recipients of DOT funds from imposing vaccine and mask mandates.
- Require local compliance or cooperation with federal immigration enforcement and with other presidential goals.

Until further guidance is given by DOT, it remains unclear how these changes will affect existing city projects.

Will state funds our city receives be affected by the executive

+



orders? (Added Feb. 6, 2025)

It is common for cities to receive funds from state programs which are funded by the federal government. Cities should check with the state to determine if any of these programs are affected.

Do the executive orders affect a city's ability to receive aid from FEMA in the case of an emergency? (Added Feb. 6, 2025) +

The executive order, *Council to Assess the Federal Emergency Management Agency*, does not require any immediate changes to FEMA responses. The order creates a "FEMA Review Council" charged with assessing and enhancing FEMA's effectiveness. The review council is to provide an assessment of the adequacy of FEMA's response to disasters during the previous four years, and compare FEMA's responses with other state, local, and private sector responses. It is not yet known if any of the council's recommendations will affect cities.

## General questions

What should my city be doing right now? +

This is a complex and rapidly evolving situation. There are still many uncertainties, and we are working diligently to gather more information. While we are striving to stay nimble and responsive to your needs, we want to ensure that neither we nor you take premature actions before having the clarity and context required to make informed decisions. We also

encourage you to work closely with your city attorney as your city develops plans related to executive orders and other federal actions.

Who can help our city answer questions about these issues?

+

If you have questions related to these FAQs or the federal executive orders in general, contact the League's Research Department at [research@lmc.org](mailto:research@lmc.org).

Where can I find copies of executive actions?

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[View the White House webpage for more information about the executive actions.](#)

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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

# Current Grant Opportunities

## Greater Minnesota Small Cities (Tier II Cities) Housing Aid Grant Program

The Greater Minnesota Small Cities (Tier II Cities) Housing Aid Grant Program is a new program funded by the 2023 legislative session as part of the Statewide Affordable Housing Aid program. The program was established to aid smaller Greater Minnesota cities outside the seven-county metro area with fewer than 10,000 people to develop and preserve affordable housing within their jurisdictions.

The Intent to Apply for this program is now open. Submitting notice of your intent to apply will help Minnesota Housing and key stakeholders better manage the program and tailor technical assistance to your needs.

[Access the notice of Intent to Apply.](#)

Minnesota Housing anticipates the Request for Proposals (RFP) will open on or around Feb. 20, 2025. Applications will be due sometime in April; please consult the RFP (once available) for details.

For additional details on the program, [read the program guide \(pdf\)](#).

[Learn more about the other local government housing programs.](#)

## 2025 Local Housing Trust Fund Grants

The Local Housing Trust Fund Grants Program, established in 2021, aims to boost funding for Local Housing Trust Funds and support affordable housing initiatives across Minnesota. The program is supported by \$5.8 million in one-time funding for various eligible housing-related uses.

Local governments can apply for matching funds of up to \$225,000, provided they establish a Local Housing Trust Fund by the request for proposals (RFP) application deadline. Matching funds must come from new public revenue (excluding state or federal sources) committed on or after June 29, 2021.

Eligible uses for grant funds include:

- Development, rehabilitation, or financing of housing through grants, loans, or loan guarantees.
- Matching funds from other federal, state, or private resources for housing projects.
- Down payment assistance, rental assistance, and homebuyer counseling.
- Administrative expenses (up to 10% of the grant amount).

Matching fund structure:

- New Public Revenue up to \$150,000: Matched at 100%.
- New Public Revenue between \$150,000 and \$300,000: Matched at 50%.

Application timeline:

- Intent to Apply: Opens Jan. 24, 2025, and closes **Feb. 11, 2025** (required for eligibility).
- Request for Proposals (RFP): Opens Feb. 12, 2025. Applications are due by **March 19, 2025**.

Applicants must have an established Local Housing Trust Fund by the RFP deadline and attend a technical assistance session before submitting their application. For assistance in creating a Local Housing Trust Fund, Minnesota Housing Partnership provides free support. Contact them at [RFTA@mhponline.org](mailto:RFTA@mhponline.org) for more information.

[Learn more about the Local Housing Trust Fund Grants Program.](#)

## Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grant Program Guide Now Available

Minnesota Housing's board of directors approved the Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grant Program Guide on Dec. 19, 2024. You can find the program guide on the [Local Government Housing Programs team webpage](#). (Look under the Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grants dropdown menu.)

\$8 million is allocated to the Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grant program to support cities, counties and Tribal Nations 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.

Minnesota Housing plans to release a Request for Proposals in the first quarter of 2025.

[Review the program guide for additional details \(pdf\).](#)

# Geothermal Planning Grants

In 2024, the Minnesota Legislature established the Geothermal Planning Grant Program. The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance to eligible applicants to examine the technical and economic feasibility of installing geothermal energy systems.

The Department of Commerce will administer \$1.08 million in grants to local governments across Minnesota. Eligible applicants for this grant program include counties, cities, townships or the Metropolitan Council. Grants will be awarded for up to \$150,000 for the planning of a geothermal energy system that heats and cools one or more buildings. Eligible systems include a bored geothermal heat exchanger, a groundwater thermal exchange device, and a submerged closed loop heat exchanger.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Geothermal Planning Grant program open on Dec. 16, 2024. Applications are due **March 10, 2025**.

For questions about the program and application process, email [Energy.Contracts@state.mn.us](mailto:Energy.Contracts@state.mn.us). Answers will be posted to the [Geothermal Planning Grant posting on the RFP page](#) through Feb. 28, 2025.

[Learn more and apply for a geothermal planning grant.](#)

## 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 [Local Housing Trust Fund \(LHTF\) State Match Program](#); 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.

[Learn more and apply for free technical assistance from MHP to establish or implement your LHTF.](#)

# 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 [Minnesota OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation strategic plan](#) 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 [Minnesota Cybersecurity Task Force](#) recently released the [Whole-of-State Cybersecurity Plan](#) 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 [about the plan](#), [how to participate](#), and who to contact if you have questions or need help.
- You can also [sign up to receive news and updates](#) about the Whole-of-Security Plan and the SLCGP.
- If your organization is ready to get started, complete the [Minnesota Whole-of-State survey for SLCGP participants](#).

# 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.S. Census data](#), 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](#)

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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

# Policy Committee FAQs

## Shape the League's 2026 Legislative Platform: Sign Up for 2025 Policy Committees

The League welcomes members to join in discussing issues impacting their city and cities in general, and to help shape the League's legislative policies and get involved with legislative issues. Hearing from cities around the state will be critical as the League shapes its legislative policies and priorities for the 2025 session.

### Meetings will be hybrid format

As always, the League is happy to host legislative policy committee meetings both in person at the League building in St. Paul as well as online via Zoom. Members are encouraged to participate in whatever format is most comfortable and convenient.

#### Meeting 1

During the first meeting in July, each city official shares what issues are affecting their cities and what they would like the committee to address over the span of that year's meetings. Officials are encouraged to look at specific policies and offer suggestions to change existing policies, create new ones, and delete obsolete ones.

League intergovernmental relations (IGR) staff will also provide a legislative update on the regular legislative session and any special sessions. League staff will also go through each legislative policy and explain whether it was addressed during the previous legislative session or special sessions. Staff and committee members will then discuss potential speakers for meeting 2.

#### Meeting 2

At the second meeting in August, committee members will hear from guest speakers, including representatives from state agencies and interest groups, legislators, and other local officials, to learn more about the issues that the committee has decided to focus on. The committee will also further offer and review draft changes to legislative policies.

#### Meeting 3

During the third and final meeting in September, committee members will continue to discuss and make policy changes, and vote to approve draft legislative policies.

## After the meetings

In October, the draft legislative policies will be circulated to League members for their comments. In November, the League Board of Directors will consider member comments and vote on final adoption of the League policies. The approved policies will then be published on the League's website in a document called the *2025 City Policies*. To get an idea of what to expect, you can view the *2025 Cities Policies*.

[View the 2025 City Policies \(pdf\).](#)

## Sign up!

Last year, more than 150 city officials from all around the state participated in the four committees that set the legislative policies for the League's lobbying efforts. City officials that have served before and those that have never served are encouraged to sign up. Interested in signing up? Email Ted Bengtson at [tbengtson@lmc.org](mailto:tbengtson@lmc.org).

**Important note for members who served last year:** If you have not already done so, please sign up to confirm your participation again this year, even if you served last year.

PDF versions of packets will be emailed to members in advance of each meeting.

[Sign up for a legislative policy committee.](#)

## Frequently asked questions

Here are answers to some common questions for those considering participating in policy committees:

### Who can be on a policy committee?

Current city officials and staff are eligible. City council members, mayors, city administrators, assistant city administrators, clerks, human resources staff, municipal elections officials, public safety staff, engineers, finance directors, economic development staff, and others have been members of the committees. Committee members can be new to their city position, have many years of experience, or be somewhere in between.

### When and where are the meetings?

Here is the 2024 schedule:

#### [Improving Service Delivery Committee](#)

Monday mornings: *July 21, Aug. 18, Sept. 15* | 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

#### [Improving Local Economies Committee](#)

Tuesday mornings: *July 22, Aug. 19, Sept. 16* | 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

#### [Human Resources & Data Practices Committee](#)

Tuesday afternoons: *July 22, Aug. 19, Sept. 16* | 1:30-4 p.m.

#### [Improving Fiscal Futures Committee](#)

Wednesday mornings: *July 23, Aug. 20, Sept. 17* | 9:30 a.m.-12 p.m.

# What topics does each committee address?

The topics include, but are not limited to, the following subtopics:

- Improving Service Delivery: Unfunded mandates, environmental mandates, elections, charter law, data privacy, government innovation and cooperation, and public safety.
- Improving Local Economies: Growth management, land use, boundary adjustments, housing, transportation, economic development, and telecommunications.
- Human Resources & Data Practices: Employment law, labor relations, data practices, Open Meeting Law, personnel, and pensions.
- Improving Fiscal Futures: Municipal financial management, property and other taxes, state aid programs, and financial reporting requirements.

## For more information

Still have questions? Interested but not quite sure if you should sign up? Please contact League IGR Administrative Coordinator Ted Bengtson at [tbengtson@lmc.org](mailto:tbengtson@lmc.org) or (651) 281-1242.

We look forward to you joining us!

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Your LMC Resource

Ted Bengtson

IGR Administrative Coordinator

(651) 281-1242 or (800) 925-1122

[tbengtson@lmc.org](mailto:tbengtson@lmc.org)

# The 2025 LMC Awards Program: Celebrating Excellence in Minnesota Cities

February 6, 2025

Looking for a way to celebrate your city's achievements and honor the leaders who drive its success? The League of Minnesota Cities Awards Program is the perfect opportunity to shine a spotlight on your community's accomplishments and the individuals who make it thrive.

From now until Monday, April 21, the League is accepting submissions for the [2025 LMC Awards Program](#), an annual tradition that honors the exceptional achievements of cities and local leaders across Minnesota. The LMC Awards Program recognizes innovation, leadership, and sustainability, celebrating those who make a positive and lasting impact on their communities.

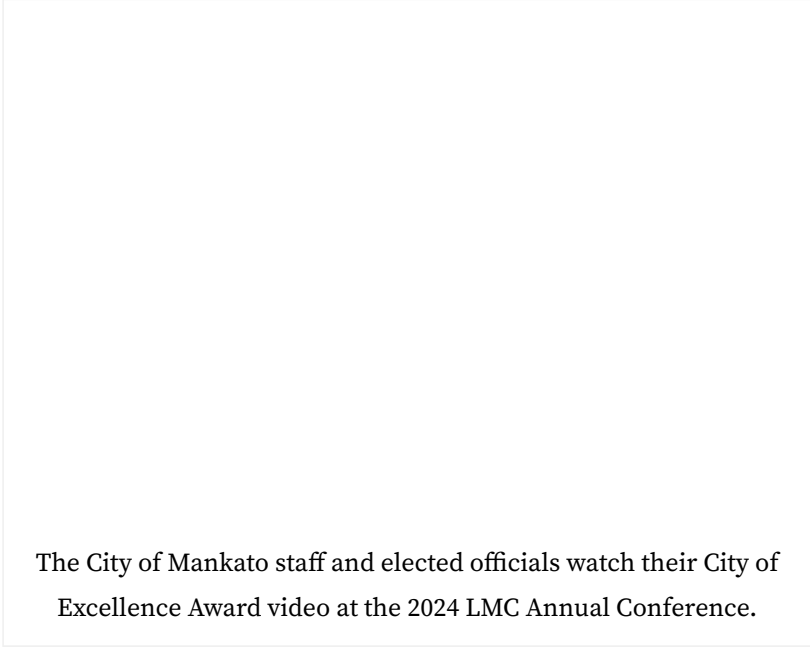
## **City of Excellence Awards: Celebrating Outstanding Cities**

The City of Excellence Awards recognize cities that stand out for their outstanding achievements in a variety of areas. Whether it's tackling local challenges, driving community engagement, or achieving remarkable growth, these awards highlight the efforts that make Minnesota's cities thrive.

The awards are given in three population categories, ensuring cities of all sizes have a chance to be recognized. In addition to these categories, a Topical Category is introduced each year, focused on a timely or relevant area of excellence. For 2025, the Topical Category is Successful Collaboration Among Local Governments—a crucial theme in today's interconnected world where local governments work together to solve shared challenges, pool resources, and create stronger communities.

This year's Successful Collaboration focus underscores the importance of partnerships between cities, counties, and other local entities to foster mutual goals. If your city has forged successful collaborations in addressing regional issues or providing better services to residents, the City of Excellence Awards might just be your chance to showcase your city's achievements!

[Learn more about the City of Excellence Awards.](#)



The City of Mankato staff and elected officials watch their City of Excellence Award video at the 2024 LMC Annual Conference.

## Honoring Above and Beyond Leadership with Individual Awards

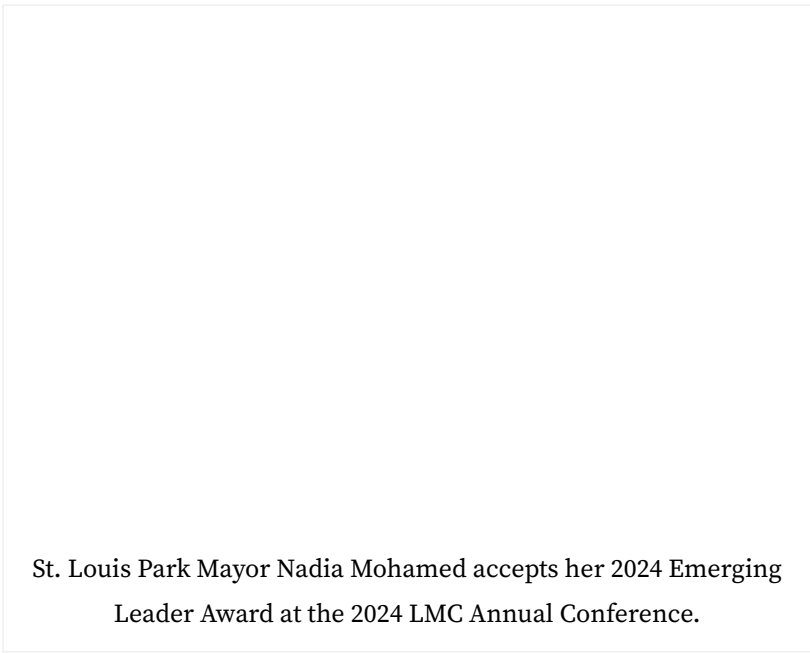
The LMC Awards Program also includes several prestigious individual awards, celebrating the dedication and leadership of key figures within local government.

- **C.C. Ludwig Award:** Named after the late C.C. Ludwig who served as the League's executive director from 1935-1959, this award recognizes elected officials who have made substantial contributions to the improvement of Minnesota city government. Whether through visionary leadership, innovative policies, or a lifelong commitment to public service, recipients of this award exemplify the best in local governance.
- **James F. Miller Leadership Award:** This award honors appointed city officials who have shown exceptional leadership and have gone above and beyond the call of duty in their role. The James F. Miller Award celebrates those individuals whose work positively influences not only their own city but also the broader state of Minnesota. The award is named after former Executive Director James F. Miller, who retired in 2015 after 22 years of service to the League.
- **Emerging Leader Award:** The Emerging Leader Award is an important recognition for elected and appointed officials who are in the early stages of their municipal careers but have already shown a remarkable commitment to public service. This award encourages and motivates up-and-coming leaders to continue their work in making a difference for Minnesota cities. Emerging Leader Award nominees must be eight or fewer years into their municipal government careers.

Please note that current League Board of Directors members and members of the Insurance Trust's Board of Trustees are not eligible for nomination in the C.C. Ludwig, James F. Miler, and

Emerging Leader awards competition.

[Learn more about the individual awards.](#)



St. Louis Park Mayor Nadia Mohamed accepts her 2024 Emerging Leader Award at the 2024 LMC Annual Conference.

## **Sustainable City Award: Recognizing Environmental Leadership**

In today's world, sustainability is at the forefront of decision-making for cities across the country, and Minnesota communities are no exception. The Sustainable City Award acknowledges cities participating in the [Minnesota GreenStep Cities](#) program that demonstrate outstanding efforts in sustainability.

GreenStep Cities is a voluntary program that helps cities implement sustainable practices aimed at protecting the environment, improving the quality of life for residents, and creating a stronger, greener future. Whether it's through energy efficiency, waste reduction, sustainable transportation initiatives, or green infrastructure, cities leading the charge on sustainability are recognized for their vision and hard work in making Minnesota a better place to live for future generations.

[Learn more about the Sustainable City Award.](#)



The City of Woodbury received the 2024 Sustainable City Award for its Woodbury Water Wise Implementation Plan.

## Why Your City Should Submit an Entry

The LMC Awards Program offers a unique opportunity for cities and individuals to be recognized for their hard work, commitment, and leadership. Whether you're a city leader or part of a community that has seen significant improvements, the LMC Awards are a chance to share your success and inspire others.

The submission process is a great opportunity to reflect on your city's accomplishments and how they've made a positive impact on the community and the region.

The awards not only highlight excellence, but they also provide a platform to celebrate the remarkable efforts happening in Minnesota's cities every day at the [LMC Annual Conference](#)! Award winners will be honored at the conference's awards ceremony held Thursday, June 26, and families and loved ones are also encouraged to attend.

Submit your city's entries by Monday, April 21, to help the League recognize the hard work and dedication of Minnesota's cities and the individuals who make them shine.

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Your LMC Resource

Don Reeder

Public Affairs Coordinator

(651) 215-4031

[dreeder@lmc.org](mailto:dreeder@lmc.org)