



## Cities Bulletin e-newsletter

Feb. 24, 2025 | Issue 7

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## [Housing Committee Advances Tax Credit Proposal To Boost Building Redevelopment](#)

A proposed tax credit could help convert vacant and underutilized buildings into modern housing and commercial spaces.

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The proposed legislation would provide funding and expand workforce housing resources to address unique challenges in Greater Minnesota cities.

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The proposed state-funded program would provide grants to cities for critical cybersecurity improvements.

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- 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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# Housing Committee Advances Tax Credit Proposal To Boost Building Redevelopment

February 24, 2025

**A proposed tax credit could help convert vacant and underutilized buildings into modern housing and commercial spaces.**

On Feb. 19, the [House Housing Finance and Policy Committee](#) heard [HF 457](#), sponsored by [Rep. Bobbie Harder](#) (R- Henderson). The bill would create the Catalyzing Underutilized Buildings (CUB) Tax Credit, modeled after the Historic Structure Rehabilitation Tax Credit, to make redevelopment projects more financially feasible.

Many cities are working with developers to turn vacant and underutilized buildings into affordable housing. Examples of potential qualifying projects include converting schools, office buildings, and shopping centers into housing and/or modern commercial spaces.

St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter testified in support of the bill and the League submitted a letter in support.

- [Read the League's letter supporting the HF 457 proposal \(pdf\).](#)
- [Watch a recording of the full committee hearing on HF 457.](#)

The committee approved the bill and sent it to the [House Taxes Committee](#) where it awaits a hearing. The Senate bill is [SF 768](#), sponsored by [Sen. Zaynab Mohamed](#) (DFL- Minneapolis), and is in the [Senate Taxes Committee](#).

## LMC staff take

The CUB Tax Credit could be a great tool for cities both in the metro and in Greater Minnesota to repurpose buildings to create more housing, mitigate against property tax shifts due to declining valuations, and support economic development. The bill has bipartisan support, and interested cities should reach out to their legislators to support the creation of a new redevelopment tool.

[Read more news articles.](#)

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# Senate Committee Considers Bills To Strengthen Housing Infrastructure in Greater Minnesota

February 24, 2025

**The proposed legislation would provide funding and expand workforce housing resources to address unique challenges in Greater Minnesota cities.**

On Feb. 20, the [Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee](#) reviewed four bills aimed at addressing housing infrastructure and workforce housing needs in Greater Minnesota. Three of these bills, which propose general fund appropriations and general obligation bond funding to help cities cover high infrastructure costs, were laid over for possible inclusion in the committee's budget bill. Infrastructure costs are often the biggest barrier to residential development in Greater Minnesota.

## Infrastructure funding bills

The three infrastructure related housing bills heard by the committee are as follows:

[SF 906](#) — sponsored by [Sen. Lindsey Port](#) (DFL-Burnsville).

- Authorizes \$5 million in general fund resources to the existing [Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grant Program](#).
- [Read LMC's written testimony in support of the bill \(pdf\)](#).

[SF 1339](#) – sponsored by [Sen. Grant Hauschild](#) (DFL-Hermantown).

- Authorizes \$20 million in general obligation bond proceeds to boost funding for the [Greater Minnesota Housing Infrastructure Grant Program](#).
- [Read LMC's written testimony in support of the bill \(pdf\)](#).

[SF 1227](#) – sponsored by [Sen. Rich Draheim](#) (R-Madison Lake).

- Creates a new Greater Minnesota Senior Housing Infrastructure Program to support infrastructure needed for housing development.
- Geared specifically to focus on the development of housing made available for seniors.
- [Read LMC's written testimony in support of the bill \(pdf\)](#).

# Workforce housing development bill

In addition to the infrastructure bills discussed, [SF 1512](#), sponsored by [Sen. Aric Putnam](#) (DFL-St. Cloud) would:

- Allocate an additional \$20 million over the next biennium to support the Workforce Housing Development Program, which funds market-rate workforce housing development in Greater Minnesota.
- [Read LMC's written testimony in support of the bill \(pdf\)](#).

## LMC staff take

While housing challenges vary across Minnesota, Greater Minnesota cities face unique barriers, including limited infrastructure funding a fewer workforce housing programs. Many of these bills seek to increase funding for existing programs or to extend one-time funding boosts from the previous biennium, which will revert back to much smaller base budget funding amounts absent additional resources authorized by the Legislature.

For cities interested in current and future funding opportunities, [view Minnesota Housing Finance Agency's local programs](#).

[Read more news articles](#).

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# Senate Reviews Cybersecurity Grant Program for Local Governments

February 24, 2025

**The proposed state-funded program would provide grants to cities for critical cybersecurity improvements.**

On Feb. 20, the Senate State and Local Government Committee took up SF 379 (Sen. Melissa Wikkund, DFL-Bloomington) for consideration and laid the bill over for possible inclusion in the committee's omnibus proposal.

The bill would establish a competitive grant program allowing cities, counties, and Minnesota's eight largest townships to access state funding for cybersecurity hardware, software, and services to better protect against malicious attacks that put sensitive data and critical infrastructure at risk.

## Key provisions of the bill

The proposal would:

- Allocate \$20 million to Minnesota IT Services (MNIT) to administer the grants.
- Provide grants up to \$25,000 for the full cost of an eligible expenditure and up to 75% of expenses beyond that, with a \$1 million cap per applicant.
  - Funds eligible for cybersecurity expenses, include:
    - General IT services.
    - Equipment to secure technology, including control systems, storage, and cloud-based backup solutions.
    - Data management and data archiving solutions.
    - Secure email hosting and email filtering solutions.
    - Firewalls, network hardware, antivirus and detection, and response software.
    - Consulting costs or other professional services needed to implement cybersecurity hardware and software.

## Hearing highlights and support

The League of Minnesota Cities testified in support of the bill, emphasizing the urgent need for cybersecurity resources, particularly for small, under-resourced cities that manage critical infrastructure yet lack the tools to defend against cyber threats. The League and the Association

of Minnesota Counties also submitted joint written testimony, highlighting the bill's benefits and the necessity of state resources to support cybersecurity efforts.

[Read the League's joint written testimony on SF 379 \(pdf\).](#)

## Next step

The House version, [HF 140](#), sponsored by [Rep. Kristin Bahner](#) (DFL-Maple Grove) awaits action in the [House State Government Finance and Policy Committee](#).

## LMC staff take

With budget constraints expected this session (pending Minnesota Management and Budget's upcoming forecast, which is expected to be released in March), bipartisan bills like SF 379 could be a strong consideration — especially if they help leverage federal cybersecurity funding and maximize non-state dollars for local government.

[Read more news articles.](#)

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# House Housing Committee Advances Tax Credit Changes To Support Greater Minnesota Housing Needs

February 24, 2025

**The League-supported bill would expand the State Housing Tax Credit to better support market-rate workforce housing projects in Greater Minnesota.**

On Feb. 19, the [House Housing Finance and Policy Committee](#) heard [HF 1067](#), (Rep. Jeff Dotseth, R-Silver Township), and advanced the bill to the [House Taxes Committee](#) for consideration.

The bill seeks to better align the [State Housing Tax Credit Program and Contribution Fund](#) more closely with Greater Minnesota's housing needs by waiving income limitations for certain projects.

## Bill details

Currently, the program allows taxpayers and businesses to receive an 85% tax credit in exchange for contributions to support housing development. This bill would expand eligibility to projects under the workforce housing development program, making them eligible for grants and loans from the housing tax credit contribution fund.

The change would provide Greater Minnesota developers with another financing tool to help support market-rate workforce housing development while offering businesses more certainty in supporting individual projects that drive job creation, business expansion, and local economic development.

## Support and next steps

The League provided testimony in support of the bill along with the Minnesota Housing Partnership, Skip Duchesneau (developer with D.W. Jones Management), and Mark Borseth (former City of Thief River Falls public works director and current director of Digi-Key Corporate Facilities).

The Senate companion of the bill will be introduced in the coming weeks and will likely be referred to the [Senate Housing and Homelessness Prevention Committee](#) for consideration.

## LMC staff take

There are far fewer programs available to Greater Minnesota cities and their developer partners that focus specifically on market-rate workforce housing, which is a critical need in

many communities. This bill would:

- Provide another tool for developers and to attract private investment.
- Help state dollars go further in supporting housing projects.
- Address committee members' interest in providing a boost in available resources for the program. In 2024, the full \$9.9 million in available tax credits were used.

[Read more news articles.](#)

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# Senate Committee Considers Update to TIF Redevelopment Rules

February 24, 2025

**A proposed bill aims to modernize Minnesota's Tax Increment Financing (TIF) law by updating eligibility rules, adjusting the blight test, and shortening redevelopment timelines.**

On Feb. 18 the [Senate Taxes Committee](#) heard [SF 7](#), a bill focused on TIF, sponsored by Committee Chair [Sen. Ann Rest](#) (DFL-New Hope). The bill aims to modernize the 50-year-old TIF law by updating eligibility requirements and timelines to better align with local redevelopment needs.

## Key changes in the bill

The bill would modify what is known as the “blight test” by eliminating the lesser used renewal and renovation districts, and by applying that district’s more flexible criteria to redevelopment districts. The bill also would reduce the lifespan of redevelopment districts, shortening it from 25 to 20 years.

## Support and concerns

The League of Minnesota Cities and other city organizations praised the effort to update the statute but expressed some concerns about:

- The shortened duration of redevelopment districts.
- The need to extend the five-year rule for project completion.
- A long-requested adjustment to the blight test, changing the requirement from “more than 50%” to simply “50%” structurally substandard buildings.

Committee members were generally supportive of the legislation, though one raised concern that a shorter redevelopment period for districts could be problematic for some cities, especially those establishing development districts in Greater Minnesota. The bill was laid over for possible inclusion in an omnibus tax bill.

## House version

The House version of the bill, [HF 948](#), has been introduced and awaits committee action. It is sponsored by House Tax Committee Chair [Rep. Greg Davids](#) (R-Preston).

[Read more news articles.](#)

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# Enhancing Workplace Safety: Hazard Communication and Minnesota Employee Right-to- Know

February 19, 2025

*Guest post by Garrett Johnson, Loss Control Consultant*

In fiscal year 2024, Hazard Communication (HazCom) and Minnesota Employee Right-to-Know (ERTK) ranked among MN OSHA's top ten most frequently cited violations. This highlights the critical need for employers to maintain compliance with these standards to ensure workplace safety.



Minnesota has adopted the federal HazCom standard but has also implemented more stringent regulations under the state's ERTK program. While both standards are designed to protect workers from hazardous chemicals, MN's ERTK extends coverage to ionizing and non-ionizing radiation and biological agents, which are not addressed by the federal standard. Additionally, Minnesota mandates annual employee training, whereas the federal requirement is for one-time training.

## Key Components of HazCom and ERTK Compliance

To maintain a safe and compliant workplace, employers must develop a written hazard communication program that meets federal and state regulations. Here are some essential areas to focus on:

### 1. Clear Labeling of Chemicals

Proper labeling is a fundamental aspect of hazard communication. Every container should have a label that includes the chemical identifier and appropriate hazard pictograms. These labels help employees quickly recognize potential hazards and take necessary precautions when handling chemicals.

## **2. Easy Access to Safety Data Sheets (SDS)**

Safety Data Sheets (SDS) provide detailed information about chemicals, including potential hazards, handling procedures, first-aid measures, and storage guidelines. Employees should be trained in locating and interpreting SDS to ensure they are prepared in case of an emergency.

## **3. Regular Employee Training**

Employee training is vital for reinforcing safety practices and raising awareness about chemical hazards. Employers must provide training:

- Before an employee's first exposure to hazardous chemicals.
- When there is a change in work conditions affecting chemical exposure.
- Annually, as required by Minnesota law.

Training should cover specific chemical hazards, safe handling procedures, emergency response protocols, and company policies regarding hazard communication. Employees should also be informed of any updates or changes to SDS and safety protocols.

## **4. Proper Storage and Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

Proper storage of chemicals reduces the risk of spills, leaks, and accidents. Employers should ensure chemicals are stored in appropriate containers and well-ventilated areas. Additionally, employees must have access to the necessary PPE, such as gloves, goggles, and respirators, to mitigate exposure risks and prevent injuries.

# **Strengthening Workplace Safety**

By implementing these best practices, employers can enhance workplace safety and ensure employees are well-informed about hazardous materials. Proactively addressing HazCom and ERTK requirements reduces the risk of violations and fosters a safer and healthier work environment.

For additional guidance or questions, reach out to your loss control consultant.

## **Upcoming Safety and Loss Control Workshops**

**Our 2025 Safety and Loss Control Workshops, scheduled for March and April, will feature sessions on hazard communication and safe chemical handling.** These workshops provide valuable insights and practical strategies for maintaining workplace safety compliance.

## **Resources**

- [OSHA Hazard Communication Standard Overview](#)
- [MN OSHA: Employer's Guide to Developing an Employee-Right-to-Know Program \(PDF\)](#)
- [MN OSHA Employee-Right-to-Know Model Program \(Word doc\)](#)



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Your LMC Resource

Loss Control Consultants are available to assist with questions about coverages, risk management and more.

[Connect with Loss Control Consultants](#) (choose “Loss Control” under “Department”)

# Current Grant Opportunities

## Statewide Waste Reduction and Reuse Grants

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) has \$820,000 available to fund waste reduction and reuse projects across the state and cities are eligible to apply. These grants support long-term environmental benefits for Minnesotans.

For this grant round, projects will be prioritized if they include:

- Education and outreach, infrastructure, supplies, and/or technical assistance.
- Reusable systems, replacing single-use items with durable alternatives, including cleaning and maintenance equipment.
- Repair training programs, curriculum development, or apprenticeships to build a local, sustainable repair workforce, reducing costs for Minnesotans.

The application deadline is **March 27, 2025**.

### Questions?

Email [grants.pca@state.mn.us](mailto:grants.pca@state.mn.us) with the subject line “FY25 Statewide Waste Reduction & Reuse Grants” by 4 p.m. on March 20, 2025. MPCA employees cannot discuss this opportunity directly.

[Learn more and apply for a statewide waste reduction and reuse grant.](#)

## Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation Paint the Town Grant

[Southern Minnesota Initiative Foundation \(SMIF\)](#) is currently accepting applications for free paint and coating products for community mural, community welcome sign, historic structure, or public art projects or to refresh public spaces in preparation for significant community milestone celebrations through its Paint the Town Grant program. This grant opportunity is available to communities with a population under 10,000 throughout [SMIF's 20-county region](#). Applications are due to SMIF by **March 31, 2025**.

The program encourages community collaboration by donating up to 100 gallons of paint per project, fostering volunteer engagement, creativity, and local pride while enhancing public spaces. Eligible public art projects may include creative placemaking initiatives like painting staircases, picnic tables, pop-up parks, or other artistic installations that add vibrancy to a community.

Eligible applicants include 501(c)(3) nonprofits, local government agencies, and public schools. All projects must be in a community of 10,000 or fewer residents, have a visible impact, and be

accessible to the public.

Since 1997, SMIF has distributed over 10,955 gallons of paint to 324 projects. The Paint the Town Grant was officially launched in 2015.

[Learn more and apply for a Paint the Town Grant.](#)

## 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.](#)

## 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 LHTE.](#)

## 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 2025 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

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