



Cities Bulletin e-newsletter

March 24, 2025 | Issue 11

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

[Tax-Exempt Status for Municipal Bonds at Risk](#)

[Updates on Cannabis Licensing, Municipal Participation, and Tribal Compacting](#)

[Lawmakers Consider Bills on Community TV Grants and Broadband Franchising](#)

[New Report Highlights Challenges and Solutions of Local Government Workforce Crisis](#)

[Register Now for City Fest in Duluth This June](#)

[On the City Spot Blog: LMCIT Administrator Dan Greensweig Honored With International Leadership Award](#)

[Free Webinar — Unlocking Opportunities: Benefits of the 4M Fund Investment and Cash Management Program](#)

[Grants Available for Arts Experiences, Solar Projects, and More](#)

[Reminder: 2025 LMC Awards Program Is Open for Submissions](#)



March 24, 2025 | Issue 11

[View email as a webpage](#)

[Tax-Exempt Status for Municipal Bonds at Risk](#)

As Congress discusses extending tax provisions, they are exploring ways to raise revenue and reduce the budgetary burden.

In Other News

[Updates on Cannabis Licensing, Municipal Participation, and Tribal Compacting](#)

The rules for adult-use cannabis are expected to be adopted near the end of the first quarter, after which, qualified applicants in uncapped license categories can receive preliminary approval and begin the site registration process.

[Lawmakers Consider Bills on Community TV Grants and Broadband Franchising](#)

The Equal Access to Broadband Act was heard, along with a proposal that would provide funding to support local TV channels.

[New Report Highlights Challenges and Solutions of Local Government Workforce Crisis](#)

The report reveals significant recruitment and retention challenges driven by generational shifts, resource constraints, and evolving workforce expectations.

More Information and Resources

[Register Now for City Fest in Duluth This June](#)

[On the City Spot Blog: LMCIT Administrator Dan Greensweig Honored With International Leadership Award](#)

Featured Events

[2025 Safety and Loss Control Workshops](#)

March-April — 8 locations

[City Attorneys Breakfast: Hot Topics in City Risk Management](#)

Various dates and locations

[Unlocking Opportunities: Benefits of the 4M Fund Investment and Cash Management Program](#)

April 8 — virtual

[2025 LMC Annual Conference](#)

June 25-27 — Duluth

[Upcoming League Events](#)

[Online Learning](#)

[Grants Available for Arts Experiences, Solar Projects, and More](#)

[Reminder: 2025 LMC Awards Program Is Open for Submissions](#)

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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Tax-Exempt Status for Municipal Bonds at Risk

March 24, 2025

As Congress discusses extending tax provisions, they are exploring ways to raise revenue and reduce the budgetary burden.

Many of the provisions from the 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act are set to expire at the end of this year, requiring Congress to find new funding sources in order to extend them.

Earlier this year, a leaked document from the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee suggested eliminating the tax-exempt status of municipal bonds. The federal tax exemption on interest from these bonds has existed for over a century, predating the country's first income tax code. Minnesota also exempts interest income from these bonds from state income tax.

Impact on cities

Since 2015, state and local governments in Minnesota have invested \$66 billion in projects financed by tax-exempt municipal bonds, resulting in an estimated \$1.4 billion in taxpayer savings.

Eliminating or reducing the tax exemption on these bonds would significantly increase borrowing costs, shifting infrastructure costs to the state and local taxpayer level. Additionally, it would make it harder for small communities to access the bond market for essential infrastructure projects.

Next steps

The League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) is actively collaborating with the National League of Cities and the Minnesota Government Finance Officers Association to advocate against the removal of this exemption. LMC representatives recently met with lawmakers in Washington D.C., to discuss the issue.

[Learn more about the use of municipal bonds in Minnesota \(pdf\).](#)

[Read more news articles.](#)

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Updates on Cannabis Licensing, Municipal Participation, and Tribal Compacting

March 24, 2025

The rules for adult-use cannabis are expected to be adopted near the end of the first quarter, after which, qualified applicants in uncapped license categories can receive preliminary approval and begin the site registration process.

Licensing timeline update

The application window for cannabis businesses closed on March 14. The rules for adult-use cannabis are expected to be adopted near the end of the first quarter. Once finalized, qualified applicants in uncapped license categories will be eligible to receive preliminary approval and begin the site registration process. This means applicants for a cannabis microbusiness license may soon seek zoning compliance certification and local retail registration in the weeks and months after the rules are adopted.

To assist partners in understanding the licensing process, the Office of Cannabis Management (OCM) has created a visual overview of the application process as required by law.

[Access an overview of the steps involved in the cannabis licensing application process \(pdf\).](#)

City participation in the licensing process

Cities play an important role in the licensing process, and OCM needs cities to complete the [Delegation and Contact Form](#). This form ensures cities are prepared to handle:

- Zoning compliance certification.
- Local retail registration for businesses conducting retail sales.

Cannabis retailers must obtain both a state-issued license and a local retail registration. The form captures contact information for zoning authority representatives, and informs OCM of any decisions to delegate local retail registration authority.

Any city with zoning authority over proposed cannabis businesses is responsible for managing zoning compliance certifications for proposed cannabis businesses within its jurisdiction. These cities must register for an account in Accela, OCM's licensing system. OCM has provided a guide, [Registering for Accela for Zoning Compliance Certification \(pdf\)](#), to help cities complete the process.

Municipal licensing bill

On March 18, The [House Commerce Finance and Policy Committee](#) heard a bill, [HF 1634 \(Rep. Zack Stephenson, DFL-Coon Rapids\)](#) that would allow cities to hold a lower-potency hemp edible retailer license and a municipal cannabis store license. Currently, the 2023 cannabis law limits entities to holding only one type of license.

Many cities have successful municipal liquor stores and value the ability to sell edible cannabinoid products at these stores. However, some cities have discovered they would lose the ability to sell these products at a municipal liquor store if they open a municipal cannabis store, because they can only hold one license. The proposed bill seeks to address this issue.

Tribal compacting

The 2023 law also requires the governor to establish cannabis policy agreements with Minnesota's 11 Tribal Nations. This topic has recently gained attention, and Gov. Tim Walz's office is actively engaged in negotiations. These discussions remain private between each tribal nation and the governor.

Reports suggest that tribal nations may be allowed to operate cannabis retailers in locations across the state without participating in the OCM licensing process.

[Read more news articles.](#)

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Lawmakers Consider Bills on Community TV Grants and Broadband Franchising

March 24, 2025

The Equal Access to Broadband Act was heard, along with a proposal that would provide funding to support local TV channels.

During the week of March 17, Minnesota lawmakers considered two bills related to telecommunications and broadband access. The House Legacy Finance Committee reviewed a proposal geared toward supporting local public, educational, and governmental television channels, while the Senate Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee examined legislation that would give local governments the authority to franchise internet providers. Both bills received committee support and were laid over for possible inclusion in future omnibus bills.

Community TV grants

On March 19, the House legacy committee heard HF 1740 (Rep. Danny Nadeau, R-Rogers), which would provide a grant to the Minnesota Association of Community Telecommunications Administrators (MACTA). The grant would be used to support local public, educational, or governmental cable television channels in providing programming that fosters community and civic engagement.

As amended, the bill would appropriate \$7.5 million in fiscal years 2026 and 2027. It received strong committee support and was passed and laid over for possible inclusion in a future omnibus legacy funding bill.

Equal access to broadband bill

On March 21, the Senate broadband and rural development committee heard the Equal Access to Broadband Act, which received significant attention last session. The bill, SF 2045 (Sen. Ann Rest, DFL New Hope), would allow local governments to franchise internet providers similar to how they currently franchise cable providers. The proposal is supported by the League, and the Minnesota Association of Telecommunication Administrators.

Plymouth City Manager Dave Callister, testifying on behalf of the League, highlighted how the streaming industry has evolved and emphasized the need to update Minnesota's laws governing local franchises and the private use of public rights-of-way.

However, the bill faced opposition from cable companies and their associations, saying that it would create an unaffordable "new tax" and impede on the state's goal of achieving border-to-border broadband access.

The bill was also passed and laid over for possible inclusion in an omnibus bill.

[Read more news articles.](#)

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New Report Highlights Challenges and Solutions of Local Government Workforce Crisis

March 24, 2025

The report reveals significant recruitment and retention challenges driven by generational shifts, resource constraints, and evolving workforce expectations.

The League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) recently partnered with the Citizens League and the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) to shed light on an emerging workforce crisis in Minnesota's local governments. The organizations collaborated on a report, ["Strengthening Public Service: Workforce Challenges and Opportunities for Local Government Entities in Minnesota,"](#) which reveals significant recruitment and retention challenges driven by generational shifts, resource constraints, and evolving workforce expectations.

The growing challenge

Minnesota has long prided itself on strong civic engagement, with a robust public sector workforce comprising employees in 856 cities, 87 counties, and more than 1,700 townships. However, a dwindling pipeline of government workers threatens the efficiency and sustainability of local services.

The report highlights a stagnation in job recovery following the COVID-19 pandemic, with a notable sector-wide decline between 2020 and 2022. Key factors contributing to this workforce challenge include an aging employee base, increasing workloads, and competition from the private sector. Additionally, many government employees shared that burnout, lack of advancement opportunities, and concerns about job security are major deterrents to staying in public service.

Critical workforce gaps

The report identifies specific sectors within local government facing the most severe staffing shortages. Among them are:

- Law enforcement
- Public safety
- Infrastructure maintenance
- Human services
- Information technology

Municipal leaders reported difficulty attracting qualified candidates for these critical roles, with generational differences in job expectations playing a role. Younger workers are typically

seeking more flexible work environments and career development opportunities — areas where local governments often struggle to compete with private employers.

The role of resources

Funding disparities between urban and rural communities exacerbate these workforce challenges. Cities and counties with greater financial resources experience fewer difficulties in hiring and retaining employees, while less-funded local governments face continuous staff turnover. The report notes that inconsistent local government aid, restrictive property tax levies, and competition for capital investment make it difficult for municipalities to offer competitive salaries and benefits.

Key recommendations

The report outlines several recommendations to strengthen Minnesota's local government workforce, including:

- **Enhanced recruitment strategies:**
 - Developing internship and apprenticeship programs to attract younger workers.
 - Expanding public awareness of government career opportunities.
- **Competitive compensation and benefits:**
 - Conducting wage studies to ensure competitive salaries.
 - Exploring flexible benefit solutions, such as paid time off PTO cash-outs and transit reimbursements.
- **Training and professional development:**
 - Increasing access to certifications and technical training for specialized roles.
 - Implementing leadership development programs to address succession planning.
- **Workplace culture and employee well-being:**
 - Addressing workload concerns to prevent burnout.
 - Providing mental health support and policies to enhance workplace safety.

Moving forward

With over 940 Minnesotans contributing feedback to this study, the Strengthening Public Service report serves as both a wake-up call and a roadmap for addressing Minnesota's local government workforce crisis. As the state continues to navigate economic and demographic shifts, policymakers and community leaders must take decisive action to ensure a sustainable and effective public sector workforce.

Minnesota's local governments play a critical role in maintaining essential services, from infrastructure and public safety to education and civic engagement. Ensuring that these services remain robust requires investment, innovation, and a renewed commitment to attracting and retaining dedicated public servants.

As discussions around these challenges unfold, stakeholders hope that the report's findings will lead to meaningful changes, fostering a new generation of government employees dedicated to serving Minnesota communities.

Learn more

Want to dive deeper into the “Strengthening Public Service” report? Join us at the 2025 LMC Annual Conference for a pre-conference workshop led by Citizens League Executive Director Jake Loesch and Policy Director Luna Allen-Bakerian. This workshop will provide an opportunity to delve into these insights, discuss actionable recommendations, and explore ways to strengthen the local government workforce across Minnesota.

[Learn more and register for the pre-conference workshop today.](#)

[Read more news articles.](#)

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LMCIT Administrator Dan Greensweig Honored with International Leadership Award

March 18, 2025

We are thrilled to announce that Dan Greensweig, administrator of the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT), has been honored with the prestigious Award for Excellence in Leadership by the Association of Governmental Risk Pools (AGRiP). This international recognition highlights Greensweig's transformational leadership and dedication to addressing post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among first responders.



A Distinguished Career in Public Entity Risk Pooling

Greensweig has served as the LMCIT administrator since 2017, overseeing a joint powers self-insurance trust with \$150 million in annual premiums, providing workers' compensation and property/casualty coverage to more than 1,200 Minnesota cities and local government entities. In role as administrator, he provides strategic direction and oversees all of the Trust's operational functions, including claims, underwriting, loss control, human resources, technology, budgeting, and contract management.

Prior to his current role, Greensweig served as LMCIT deputy administrator from 2010-2017 and previously held key leadership positions with the Minnesota Association of Townships Insurance Trust, the Minnesota State Auditor's Office, and the law firm of Kennedy & Graven.

Transformative Leadership in PTSD Support and Mental Health

Greensweig's work has reshaped the approach, conversation, and treatment of PTSD for first responders in Minnesota. His leadership has extended beyond state lines, influencing public entity pools across the country in how they support first responders, their public employers, and the wider pooling community.

"Dan led his pool in using a data-informed approach to identify and develop resources and services that address critical public safety mental health needs," President of the AGRiP Board of Directors Barb Zemlock said. "His innovative thinking has helped create sustainable solutions for addressing PTSD within workers' compensation and liability frameworks."

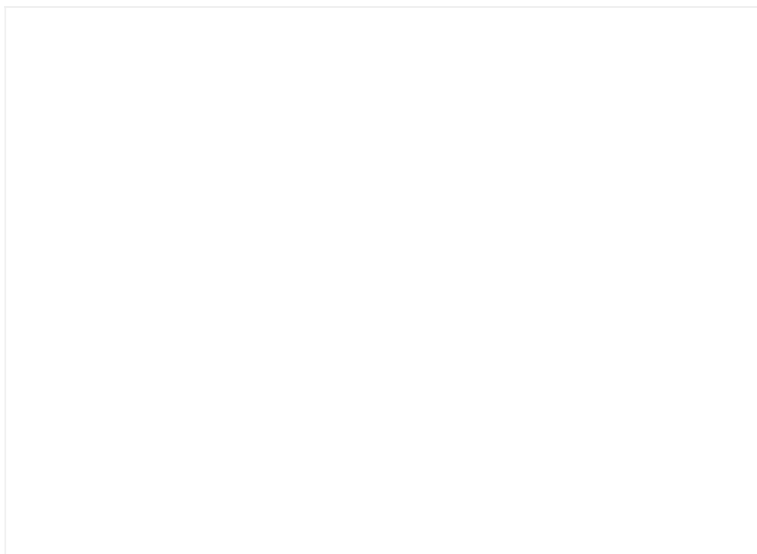
Under Greensweig's leadership, LMCIT launched:

- The PTSD and Mental Health Toolkit to provide education and resources.
- The "Accept, Prevent, Treat" campaign to increase awareness and support.
- The Peer Support Advisory Board, which was brought under the League of Minnesota Cities umbrella to enhance mental health initiatives.

Cutting-Edge Research and Data-Driven Policing Initiatives

Greensweig's innate curiosity and drive for innovation led to groundbreaking research collaborations, most notably with University of Chicago Professor John Rappaport. This partnership examined the impact of insurance on police behavior and resulted in nationally recognized research.

Greensweig also spearheaded LMCIT's collaboration with Benchmark Analytics, applying predictive analytics to improve policing outcomes. This effort, known as the iMPACT Project, leverages data to identify and mitigate risks within law enforcement agencies, leading to evidence-based best practices that aim to reduce claims and improve community safety.



LMCIT Board of Trustees Chair Dave Callister, Greensweig, and
former chair D. Love

Mentorship and Commitment to Professional Development

Greensweig is not only a leader in his field but also a dedicated mentor. He actively supports the professional development of his staff and peers through:

- University-level teaching in public administration and law.
- Hosting the National League of Cities (NLC) Mutual intern program, helping to develop emerging industry talent.
- Serving as a mentor through the NLC mentor program, offering guidance to future leaders.
- Encouraging staff participation in educational programs and professional development opportunities.

“Dan’s leadership is defined by innovation, curiosity, and a deep commitment to improving public safety,” President of the LMCIT Board of Trustees Dave Callister said. “His ability to connect ideas, champion evidence-based solutions, and mentor staff has made a lasting impact on LMCIT, its members, and communities across Minnesota.”

Recognizing Excellence in Leadership

AGRiP’s Award for Excellence in Leadership is an esteemed honor given to individuals across the United States, Canada, and Australia who have demonstrated transformational leadership, resolved key industry challenges, mentored others, and made significant contributions to professional development in public entity risk pooling.

Greensweig formally received his award on March 18 at the AGRiP Governance Conference in Las Vegas. His dedication to public safety, evidence-based solutions, and mentorship have profoundly impacted LMCIT and the wider pooling community. His recognition by AGRiP is a testament to his outstanding leadership and commitment to making positive changes in public safety.

Current Grant Opportunities

Arts Experiences Grant Program

Arts Experiences 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.

[Learn more and apply for the SolarAPP+ Solar Permitting Incentive Program.](#)

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 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 \(pdf\).](#)

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](#)

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

LMC Awards

The 2025 LMC Awards Program is now open for submissions!

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](#)

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