

**PART IV**  
**REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT FUNCTIONS OF CITIES**

---

**CHAPTER 17: INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION**

I. The Joint Powers Act..... 3

II. Statutorily authorized cooperation ..... 5

    A. Service districts .....7

    B. Contracts.....7

III. Intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in planning..... 7

    A. County-city cooperation .....8

    B. Regional development .....8

IV. Extra-territorial powers of cities..... 9

    A. Subdivision and zoning .....10

    B. Building code.....10

    C. Street or road improvements .....11

    D. Taxation and special assessment .....11

    E. Utilities .....11

    F. Property belonging to other units of government.....12

V. League of Minnesota Cities..... 12

VI. Other city government associations..... 14

VII. Other local government associations..... 15

VIII. How this chapter applies to home rule charter cities..... 15



# Chapter 17

## Intergovernmental cooperation

There are more than 87,000 units of government in the United States. The combined number of cities, counties, and towns in Minnesota exceeds 2,700. With schools and other special purpose districts, the number of government units increases to more than 3,500. Few states have more units of government than Minnesota.

These units of government provide a variety of services. Most require communication and cooperation with other units of government. Few, if any, governmental services are the exclusive responsibility of one unit or level of government. With society becoming increasingly complex and the individual resources of local governments shrinking, the need for harmony and cooperation is also increasingly important. When confronted with intergovernmental issues, city officials can accomplish more through cooperation than through conflict by creating full and harmonious working agreements among all involved units.

This chapter addresses the powers and processes promoting intergovernmental cooperation.

### I. The Joint Powers Act

Minn. Stat. § 471.59.

*County of Martin v. Minnesota Counties Ins. Trust*, 658 N.W.2d 598 (Minn. Ct. App. 2003).

Minnesota cities receive their authority to cooperate with other units of government from state law. State statutes authorize cooperation between cities and other units of government for particular projects and programs. Cities also receive a broad grant of authority to cooperate from the Joint Powers Act.

Minn. Stat. § 471.59, subd. 1.

Under the Joint Powers Act (ACT), any city may enter into an agreement with one or more governmental units to exercise powers common to all parties. For the purposes of the Act, the term “governmental unit” includes every city, county, town, school district, independent nonprofit firefighting corporation, any other political subdivision of this or another state, another state, the University of Minnesota, licensed nonprofit hospitals, and any agency of the state of Minnesota or the United States. The term also includes any instrumentality of a governmental unit that has independent policy-making and appropriating authority.

*Local Gov't Info. Sys. v. New Hope*, 311 Minn. 258, 248 N.W.2d 316 (1976).

[LMCIT Joint Powers Resources.](#)

See LMC In-Depth Policy Analysis article: [Cities across Minnesota cooperating to provide services and perform functions.](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 471.59, subd. 2](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 471.59, subd. 3](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 471.59, subd. 3](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 471.59, subd. 4](#)

[Minn. Stat. § 471.59, subd. 5](#)

*Matter of Greater Morrison Sanitary Landfill SW-15*, 435 N.W.2d 92 (Minn. Ct. App. 1989).

See LMCIT risk management memo [Liability Coverage for Joint Powers Agreements.](#)

The Act authorizes cities to cooperatively exercise any powers common to the participating units of government. In addition, local governments (such as counties and cities) may enter into agreements whereby one entity will exercise power for both governments. For example, a city and county may form a joint powers law enforcement agency where both governments engage in law enforcement activities through that joint powers entity. Or, a city may enter into a joint powers agreement where a nearby county will perform all law enforcement activities for both the city and that county. In exercising such powers, local governments are not necessarily confined to their territorial limits.

Cities in Minnesota carry out a wide range of activities on a cooperative basis. For example, they are engaged in the joint operation of ambulance services, cemeteries, municipal bands, police radio services, public hospitals, parks and recreational programs, sanitary landfills, incinerators, and sewage disposal plants and systems. One of the most profitable areas of cooperation in Minnesota is the joint purchase and use of equipment and supplies. Other potential uses are in the field of property tax assessment and regional planning.

The Joint Powers Act provides that the governing bodies of each of the cooperating units must approve an agreement before exercising common powers. The agreement must state its purpose and the power the units will exercise jointly. The agreement must also describe the method the units will use to accomplish their goals, or the manner in which they will exercise their powers. The agreement must also provide for the following:

- A method of disbursing of funds that must be consistent with the participating governmental units' usual methods of disbursing funds and contracts let. Purchases made under the agreement must conform to requirements applicable to contracts and purchases of any of the parties.
- Strict accountability on the receipt and expenditure of all funds.
- A definite term of life for the agreement, conditions for terminating the agreement, or both.
- Distribution of the property acquired as the result of the joint exercise of powers, if and when the cooperative undertaking ends.

All joint power agreements should also address the question of liability. It may be possible to allocate risk and minimize the potential for more costly and complex "internal" conflicts through well-drafted joint powers agreements. Certain joint powers entities, depending on their powers, are separate entities from the city and must carry their own insurance. For other activities under the Joint Powers Act, the city's insurance may cover the cooperative exercise of powers. Typical examples of the latter are mutual aid agreements and service contracts.

*Reimer v. City of Crookston*, 421 F.3d 673 (8th Cir. 2005).

The 2006 Legislature addressed a joint liability problem created by a federal court decision. (In 2005, the 8<sup>th</sup> Circuit Court, which includes Minnesota, found the members of a joint powers entity were each individually liable up to the state tort caps, simply because of their participation in the joint powers operation.)

Minn. Stat. § 471.59, subd. 1a.

Minn. Stat. § 466.04, subd. 1.

The Legislature clarified the application of the state tort liability limits to joint powers arrangements, specifying that a single limit applies regardless of the number of governmental units participating in the joint powers entity or arrangement. The law also adjusted the statutory tort caps for the state and local units of government in two phases—to \$400,000 per individual and \$1.2 million per event beginning on Jan. 1, 2008, and then to \$500,000 per individual and \$1.5 million per event beginning on July 1, 2009.

Minn. Stat. § 471.59, subd. 6.

Minn. Stat. § 134.20.

Residence requirements for holding office in any governmental unit do not apply to any officer appointed under a joint agreement. When an agreement provides for a joint board to administer the joint program, the board must be representative of the parties to the agreement. The agreement may specify the number, composition, qualifications, and terms of board members. This specification prevails over statutory or charter requirements for the structure and composition of the board if the unit could exercise the power on its own. For example, if two cities operate libraries separately, they might need two five-member library boards. Under a joint powers agreement, they could designate a single board of five to administer the joint library.

## II. Statutorily authorized cooperation

In addition to the Joint Powers Act, cities have specific statutory authorization to undertake joint programs with other units of government in several areas. The statutes give cities the power to undertake the following tasks jointly, but these activities could also be done under a joint powers agreement:

Minn. Stat. § 273.072.

Minn. Stat. § 471.24.

Minn. Stat. § 436.06.

Minn. Stat. § 436.05.

Minn. Stat. § 471.476.

Minn. Stat. § 471.16.

- Employ an assessor jointly with other communities.
- Join with contiguous statutory cities and towns to maintain public cemeteries.
- Operate a joint municipal police department with adjacent cities.
- Contract with a county, city or township for police protection.
- Operate an ambulance service with other political subdivisions.
- Operate recreational facilities or programs for senior citizens.

Minn. Stat. §§ 471.15-.19.

- Operate a community recreation program as a joint effort involving a city (or cities), the county, school district, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), American Legion, and neighboring townships. (Frequently, a city and a school district will jointly establish a recreation board or program.)

In addition, cities may discharge certain responsibilities by entering contracts with their respective county boards. For example, cities may enter contracts for:

Minn. Stat. § 134.12, subd. 2.

- Library services.

Minn. Stat. § 436.05.

- Police protection.

Minn. Stat. § 394.32.

See Part IV *Extra-territorial powers of cities*.

- Planning assistance and enforcement of land use controls within city boundaries.

Finally, an unlimited range of opportunities for intergovernmental cooperation exists in the performance of administrative duties. For example:

Minn. Stat. § 471.64.

*Cooperative Purchasing Venture*.

- Cities can save money through joint purchasing programs carried out cooperatively with several units of government under the Joint Powers Act or other laws. Considerable savings on the purchase and rental of equipment are often possible through cooperation with other units of government in the establishment of equipment pools.

Minn. Stat. § 471.59.

Minn. Stat. § 471.16.

- The city and school board can often best implement a local recreation program under a joint powers agreement.

Minn. Stat. §§ 365.15-.19 (town law), Minn. Stat. §§ 438.08-.10 (city fire protection).

See *Model Fire Contract Between City and Town*.

See LMCIT risk management memo *Providing Assistance in Emergencies* and also the *LMCIT Model Mutual Aid Agreement*.

- Cities have long assisted one another with fire protection under mutual aid agreements. Contracts between cities and townships are also common.

- Some communities hire inspectors, such as building inspectors, under the Joint Powers Act.

Minn. Stat. § 452.25.

- Many communities have long followed the practice of cooperating in the operation of utility services through contract or joint ownership, and many communities extend their utility services into unincorporated areas. Municipal utilities (electric and water) are authorized to enter into joint ventures with other municipal utilities, municipal power agencies, cooperative associations, or investor-owned utilities, to provide these utility services. A municipal gas agency and any municipal utility authorized to provide gas facilities or services may enter into a joint venture that was incorporated before June 30, 2004. The joint venture, and any municipal gas agency that is a member of the joint venture, may provide gas utility service.

Minn. Stat. § 452.26.

- Municipalities may also enter into employee sharing or exchange agreements, for example, joint hiring of a city administrator, finance director, or other employees.

City officials can discharge certain responsibilities more effectively and often more economically through contracts or agreements with other governmental units.

## A. Service districts

[Minn. Stat. ch. 375B](#) (county subordinate service districts).

[Minn. Stat. ch. 428A](#) (city special service districts).

[Minn. Stat. § 375B.03](#).

Cities and counties may establish subordinate service districts to provide services to that district. This tool, combined with the Joint Powers Act, is another method for jointly providing services, although a single subordinate service district could not include an entire county. The county board of commissioners of any county outside the seven-county metropolitan area, except any county with a city of the first class (currently only St. Louis County), may establish a subordinate service district, by resolution and after public hearing.

[Minn. Stat. § 375B.05](#).

Ten percent of the qualified voters within the portion of the county proposed for the subordinate service district could petition for its creation. Upon receipt of that petition, the county must within 30 days hold a public hearing on the issue. Within 30 days of the hearing, the county must hold a referendum vote of all qualified voters residing within the boundaries of that area. The county board must include appropriate provisions for the operation of the district in its budget, including either a tax levy on property within the boundaries of the district, a service charge against the users of the service within the district, or a combination of the two.

[Minn. Stat. § 375B.09](#).

The 2009 Legislature extended the deadline for establishing either a special district or a housing improvement area. Cities can create these city special service districts until June 30, 2013. After June 30, 2013, however, only the state Legislature can authorize establishment of a new special service district or a new housing improvement area by passing a special law.

[Minn. Stat. § 428A.101](#).

[Minn. Stat. § 428A.21](#).

## B. Contracts

[Minn. Stat. § 412.221, subd. 2](#).

Contact [LMCIT](#) (651) 281-1200 or (800) 925-1122 for more information on their [contract review service](#).

Contractual arrangements between governments and nonprofit and/or profit-making firms may also be a way to keep costs to a minimum. Many cities purchase auto towing, trash collection, tree servicing, social services, and other services from non-governmental entities. As a supplement to city attorney services, the League of Minnesota Cities Insurance Trust (LMCIT) is available to review contracts, joint powers, and mutual aid agreements.

## III. Intergovernmental cooperation and coordination in planning

Minnesota has a legislative framework for planning at all governmental levels.

This section includes a brief review of some of the actual and potential planning activities of state and local governments and the extent to which they require coordinated activity.

## A. County-city cooperation

Minn. Stat. §§ 394.21-.37  
(County Planning Act).  
Minn. Stat. § 394.32.

County boards may conduct planning activities and enact traditional land use controls. Cities may contract with the county for planning and zoning services, but county regulations are not effective within the city unless the city formally accepts them. A county may adopt and/or enforce plans within a city upon that city's request. Most counties have planning and land use control ordinances. Coordination between city councils and county boards is imperative.

Minn. Stat. § 473.121, subd. 2.  
Minn. Stat. § 473.858, subd. 2..

In many areas of the state, cities sit in close proximity to one another. Cities in the seven-county metropolitan area are required to submit their proposed comprehensive plans to adjacent governmental units and affected school districts for review and comment.

Minn. Stat. § 462.3535.  
*Nordmarken v. City of Richfield*,  
641 N.W.2d 343 (Minn. Ct. App.  
2002).

All cities and counties are authorized to develop community-based plans to facilitate cooperative agreements among adjacent communities and coordinate planning. This helps to ensure compatibility of one community's development with that in neighboring areas. A city that chooses to participate in a community-based plan must cooperate with neighboring governmental units.

A lack of significant voluntary coordination has led the state Legislature to consider state-directed planning. Unless cities and counties learn to work together when planning for their area's future development, regional and state control over local planning decisions may someday become a reality.

Minn. Stat. § 471.99.

The state or any of its political subdivisions must give 30 days prior written notice to any affected township, county, or city of any action related to sanitary landfills; waste disposal sites; construction of new buildings, roads, and related facilities (where the cost exceeds \$15,000); park establishments; or boundary expansions. However, failure to give this notice is not grounds for a civil or criminal action, imposition of a civil or criminal penalty, or challenge or invalidation of any action.

## B. Regional development

Minn. Stat. §§ 462.381-.398.  
Minn. Stat. § 462.385.  
Minnesota Regional  
Development Organizations.

There are currently 10 regional development commissions: Northwest, Headwaters, and Arrowhead in northern Minnesota; Region Five, Mid-Minnesota, Upper Minnesota Valley, and East Central in central Minnesota; Southwest and Region Nine in southern Minnesota; and the Metropolitan Council in the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Minn. Stat. § 462.388.

Commissions (except for the Metropolitan Council) are made up of representatives from public interest groups in a region, and local elected officials from counties, cities, townships, and school districts. These units select members to represent them on the commission.

Minn. Stat. § 462.39, subs. 2, 3.

A regional development commission (RDC) is authorized to receive public and private funding for regional purposes. It may prepare a comprehensive development plan for the region, consisting of policy statements, goals, standards, programs, and maps prescribing guides for the region's economic development. The RDC may also review and make recommendations on long-term comprehensive plans or on any matter the commission believes has a substantial effect on regional development, including the land use plans of cities.

Minn. Stat. § 462.39.

RDCs (or, in regions not served by an RDC, a regional organization selected by the commissioner of the Department of Employment and Economic Development such as the West Central Initiative), may develop a program to support planning on behalf of local units of government. The local planning must be related to issues of regional or statewide significance and may include, but is not limited to, the following:

- Local planning and development assistance (which may include local zoning ordinances and land use plans).
- Community or economic development plans (which may include workforce development plans, housing development plans and market analysis, JOBZ administration, grant writing assistance, and grant administration).
- Environment and natural resources plans (which may include solid waste management plans, wastewater management plans, and renewable energy development plans).
- Rural community health services.
- The development of geographical information systems to serve regional needs (including hardware and software purchases and related labor costs).

Minn. Stat. § 462.391.

Cities may submit their comprehensive plans to the RDC for review, comment, and advice. RDCs may also contract to perform provide basic administrative, research, and planning services for local units of government.

Minn. Stat. § 462.396, subs. 1, 2.

Commissions may levy taxes on all taxable property in the region. Maximum levies vary by region and pursuant to a formula provided by statute. After making such a tax levy, a commission may issue certificates of indebtedness in an amount not to exceed 50 percent of all certified taxes in the region.

Minn. Stat. § 462.397.

## IV. Extra-territorial powers of cities

The term “extra-territorial powers” refers to those powers a city government can exercise over property located outside its corporate boundaries (city limits). In certain circumstances, cities may also exercise power over the property of other governmental units.

*State v. Nelson*, 66 Minn. 166, 68 N.W. 1066 (1896).

*City of Plymouth v. Simonsen*, 404 N.W.2d 907 (Minn. Ct. App. 1987).

Minnesota cities have no general authority to extend their police powers to land beyond city limits. The courts have said that city police power is limited to the area within the city's boundaries, even though exercising that power within these limits may affect land outside its boundaries. The same rule applies to city-owned property located outside the city limits. A city may exercise all of the usual rights of ownership of land, but it may not exercise any police powers over land outside city limits, unless specifically authorized by state law such as with the State Building Code and city zoning controls or subdivision regulations.

In general, a city's jurisdiction is confined to the territorial limits of the city. However, there are important exceptions to this rule.

## A. Subdivision and zoning

Minn. Stat. § 462.358, subd. 1a.

See [Handbook, Chapter 14](#).

See LMC information memo, [Zoning Guide for Cities](#).

Minnesota cities may extend their subdivision regulations and require city approval of subdivisions located within two miles of their boundaries. This extra-territorial jurisdiction only applies to land in townships (or "unincorporated areas"). However a city may *not* extend its subdivision regulations if the town in which the land is located adopts its own subdivision regulations.

Minn. Stat. § 462.358, subd. 1a.

In situations where there are two or more noncontiguous (no common boundaries) cities with boundaries less than four miles apart, each city may extend, at an equal distance from its boundaries, its subdivision regulations to the unincorporated areas.

Minn. Stat. § 462.3585.

When subdivision or zoning regulations are extended into unincorporated land outside the city boundary, any affected city council, county board, or town board may petition the county auditor to establish a joint planning board. The joint board will consist of an equal number of members appointed from each political subdivision. This joint board will adopt zoning and subdivision regulations under the City Planning Act for the entire area within two miles of the city, and designate one of the governing bodies to serve as the governing body and board of appeals and adjustment. During the time before the joint board adopts subdivision regulations, the city's subdivision regulations apply.

## B. Building code

Minn. Stat. § 326B.121.

[Handbook, Chapter 13](#).

[Minnesota State Building Code](#).

The State Building Code is the minimum standard that applies statewide for the construction, reconstruction, alteration, and repair of all buildings and other structures. Cities may, by ordinance and with permission of the township board, extend their enforcement of the State Building Code to up to two miles outside their borders if the code is not administered or enforced in the territory.

## C. Street or road improvements

Minn. Stat. § 429.052.  
See Handbook, Chapter 25.

A city may make street or road improvements outside city limits with the consent of the affected township, or the county if the property is located in unorganized territory (an area of the county that is not part of a township or city). Once the area is annexed into the city, the city may levy special assessments against the improved properties, but the city must follow special assessment procedures provided in state law.

## D. Taxation and special assessment

The rules concerning extra-territorial taxation powers of Minnesota cities are clear: a Minnesota city cannot levy a tax or special assessment against property located outside its corporate boundaries.

## E. Utilities

Another extra-territorial power pertains to city utilities. In general, Minnesota cities may extend utility services outside their limits to serve adjoining areas.

Minn. Stat. § 471.591.

Minn. Stat. § 412.321 (authority to own municipal utilities).

Minn. Stat. § 444.075, subd. 1a (waterworks).

Before preparing detailed plans for the extension of water, sewer, electrical, or other utility services into an unincorporated area, a city must meet at least once with the town board of the affected area and the county planning commission in joint session to review the plans. The city may then proceed with the proposed extension. For example, a city may extend any waterworks or gas plant outside its limits and furnish service to consumers in the outside area at such rates and on such terms as the council or the utility commission shall determine. Most cities prefer not to extend sewer and water into an adjacent township; instead, the property requesting service may be annexed into the city.

Minn. Stat. § 412.321, subd. 3.

Minn. Stat. § 455.29 (electricity).

Minn. Stat. §§ 216B.37-.47 (service areas).

A city may not extend service into another incorporated city without that city's consent. In the case of electric light and power service, a city may extend electric lines up to 30 miles from the corporate limits, but only after the approval of the voters in the city extending the service. Again, there is a prohibition against going into another incorporated city without that city's consent. The Department of Commerce has set exclusive service areas for all electric utilities that limit extension of city electric service, with certain exceptions. No statutory city has authority to regulate the rates or services of private utilities that function outside city limits.

Minn. Stat. § 237.19 (municipal telecommunication services).

Cities may operate sewage systems both inside and outside their limits. They may own and operate a telephone exchange within their own borders, but they may not operate a telephone exchange that serves residences outside city limits.

## F. Property belonging to other units of government

A.G. Op. 477-B-28 (Mar. 15, 1955).

A city's authority over property belonging to other units of government is not easy to define. A 1955 attorney general opinion on this matter does not provide much clarification. In this opinion, the attorney general concluded that the village (now city) of Falcon Heights has the same police powers over the state fair grounds (and a portion of the University of Minnesota campus) within city boundaries as it has over private property. However, the city's authority over the property is limited by the University's and the state agricultural society's authority over the same property.

This indicates that cities have police powers over property owned by other units of government, only to the extent that these powers are not inconsistent with the powers the state has granted. (Courts in other states have relied on legislative intent wherever possible in determining if a city has power to regulate another unit of government that holds property within its jurisdiction.)

*Town of Oronoco v. City of Rochester*, 293 Minn. 468, 197 N.W.2d 426 (1972).

*City of Barnum v. County of Carlton*, 394 N.W.2d 246 (Minn. 1986).

A secondary consideration is public interest. The Minnesota Supreme Court has exempted cities from provisions of both county and town zoning ordinances, and permitted cities to develop sanitary landfills and wastewater treatment facilities at locations outside city limits. In considering how another unit's zoning ordinance applies to a city that is acting outside its boundaries, the Court balances public interests. The general rule seems to be that where a city or county attempts to establish a governmental use in violation of another zoning ordinance, the courts decide the outcome on the basis of the balancing of interests, including whether the regulation has a rational basis and is reasonable.

## V. League of Minnesota Cities

Contact the [League of Minnesota Cities](#) at 145 University Avenue West, St. Paul, MN 55103-2044. Phone: (651) 281-1200 or (800) 925-1122. Fax: (651) 281-1299. TDD: (651) 281-1290.

Representing more than 800 member cities, the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) promotes excellence in local government for all Minnesota cities. League efforts focus on:

- Policy development
- Advocacy
- Research and analysis
- Information sharing
- Education and training
- Insurance coverage and risk management
- Products and services

[Minn. Stat. § 465.58.](#)

State law expressly allows cities to pay dues to the League of Minnesota Cities, as well as the actual and necessary expenses for delegates to attend League meetings.

[A.G. Op. 63-A-5 \(Feb. 5, 1975\).](#)  
[Minn. Stat. ch. 13D](#)

See LMC information memo,  
[Meetings of City Councils.](#)

The attorney general has advised that a city council's participation in a non-public training program (such as an LMC general training event) for developing skills is not covered by the Open Meeting Law. (However, the same opinion also states that *specific* discussions of city business by a quorum or more of council at a training event could be seen as a violation of the Open Meeting Law.

Contact the [National League of Cities](#) at 1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW Suite 550 Washington, DC 20004. (202) 626-3000.

The League is a member of the National League of Cities (NLC), as are all the other state leagues in the United States. Through cooperative action with the NLC and other state leagues, the League has contacts with Congress, federal agencies, and national public administration organizations.

Contact the [LMC Intergovernmental Relations \(IGR\) staff](#) with questions, concerns, or suggestions about legislative issues and League policies.

The League develops, expresses, and advocates policies and positions concerning the governance and management of cities and the delivery of city services. The League communicates these policies and positions to the Minnesota Legislature, the governor's office, state agencies, Congress, the National League of Cities, and others involved in policy-making. Cities working cooperatively through the League are in the best position to have a greater impact on legislation of importance to city government.

Contact the [National League of Cities.](#)

In regard to federal policy issues, city officials can influence National League of Cities policies by applying to serve on NLC policy committees. By virtue of the League's membership in the National League of Cities, any LMC member is eligible to serve on an NLC policy committee. To be eligible to serve on an NLC steering committee (a smaller policy development group that drafts policies for policy committee consideration), cities must become "direct member cities" of NLC, which requires separate dues. Other benefits of direct NLC membership and the costs involved can be found on the NLC web site.

There are many ways for member city officials to get involved in the LMC policy process and to become effective advocates on city issues.

[LMC City Policies.](#)

The League's annual *City Policies* publication addresses more than 100 legislative issues that impact cities and serves as the foundation of the League's advocacy efforts. Policies are considered, discussed, and revised each year with considerable member input.

At the League's annual conference in June, city officials from across the state recommend and review policies. City officials also sign up to serve on one of four policy committees. The policy committees meet throughout the summer to draft revisions to the *City Policies*.

Once the policy committees finalize proposed revisions to the *City Policies*, the committees make specific policy recommendations to the League's Board of Directors.

The League then distributes the draft policies to member cities and solicits their comments. City officials attending League-sponsored regional meetings (held in the fall throughout the state) review and provide additional feedback on the draft policies.

In the winter, the League Board of Directors reviews the draft policies and member comments on those draft policies. The Board may amend the policies at their discretion. The Board then adopts the policies that become the foundation for League advocacy efforts during the following session of the state Legislature. The Board also has the authority to amend the *City Policies* during the legislative session, as it deems appropriate.

#### LMC Lobbying Resources.

In addition to the League policy process, members can become informed advocates through a number of League resources, including: the *Cities Bulletin*, the electronic *E-Bulletin*, *Friday Fax*, *Minnesota Cities* magazine, the annual *Law Summaries* publication, the League web site, League member forums (listservs), conferences, and additional training events.

City officials can communicate with state legislators, the governor, state agencies, and Congressional representatives in several ways: in person (in their community or at lawmakers' offices); by phone, e-mail, or letter; and by council resolution. In contacting lawmakers, officials should be specific, using bill numbers and titles, referring to specific LMC policies or bill summaries, and stating clearly what action they want a lawmaker to take.

Finally, officials are encouraged to contact the League with requests for action or information on specific issues. Only through the continuous, concerted efforts of city officials can the voice of city government be heard.

## VI. Other city government associations

Three affiliates of the League of Minnesota Cities—Metro Cities, the Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities, and the Minnesota Association of Small Cities—are formally represented on the League Board of Directors.

Contact the [Metro Cities](#) at 145 University Avenue West, St. Paul, MN 55103-2044. (651) 215-4000.

Metro Cities is a service and advocacy organization for cities in the metropolitan area. Membership is open to cities in the seven-county metropolitan area that are also members of the League of Minnesota Cities. Cities in counties adjacent to the seven-county metropolitan area may become associate members.

Contact the [CGMC](#) at 525 Park Street, Suite 470, St. Paul, MN 55103. (651) 225-8840.

The Coalition of Greater Minnesota Cities (CGMC) is a nonprofit, non-partisan advocacy organization representing cities located outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area.

Contact the [MAOSC](#) at First National Bank Building, Suite W1450, 332 Minnesota Street, St. Paul, MN 55101-1314. (651) 602-6262.

The Minnesota Association of Small Cities is also an advocacy association. Their membership is limited to cities with a population of less than 5,000.

## VII. Other local government associations

Links to the web sites of many of the [local government associations](#).

Contact the [AMC](#) at 125 Charles Avenue, Saint Paul, MN 55103-2108. (651) 224-3344.

Contact [MAT](#) at Edgewood Professional Building, 805 Central Avenue East, P.O. Box 267, St. Michael, MN 55376. (763) 497-2330.

Contact [MSBA](#) at 1900 West Jefferson Avenue, St. Peter, Minnesota 56082-3015, (507) 934-2450, (800) 324-4459 (MN Only).

Counties, townships, and school boards in Minnesota also have their own associations. There are a variety of other local government associations- too numerous to include in this *Handbook*.

The Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) is a voluntary statewide organization that assists the state's 87 counties in providing effective county governance for the people of Minnesota. AMC works closely with the legislative and administrative branches of government to try to ensure that legislation and policies favorable to counties are enacted. In addition, the association provides educational programs, training, research, and communications for county officials.

The Minnesota Association of Townships (MAT) is a voluntary membership organization representing the interests of Minnesota's organized townships and elected township officers. MAT provides education, training, and technical services to township officers and represents townships before the state Legislature and state agencies. It is the founder of the Minnesota Center for Small Communities (MCSC).

The Minnesota School Boards Association (MSBA) supports, promotes and enhances the work of public school boards. MSBA is a private nonprofit organization that provides technical assistance; cost-saving programs; and advocacy, training, research, and referral services for all of Minnesota's public schools. Membership in MSBA is voluntary.

League officials and staff work closely with these and other organizations when common interests allow.

## VIII. How this chapter applies to home rule charter cities

The materials within this chapter are generally applicable to both statutory and home rule charter cities.