

League of
Minnesota
Cities

Tell your city story

An advocacy guide
for Minnesota Cities



Advocacy tools to help you tell your city story



The League of Minnesota Cities is a non-profit, membership organization committed to serving Minnesota's cities through effective advocacy, expert analysis, trusted guidance, and collective action. The League serves its more than 800 member cities through policy development and advocacy, information-sharing, education and training, insurance coverages and services, and other products and services.

League of Minnesota Cities

145 University Avenue West
St. Paul, MN 55103-2044

TEL: (651) 281-1200
(800) 925-1122
TDD: (651) 281-1290
FAX: (651) 281-1299
WEB: www.lmc.org

Tell your city story

The advocacy tools provided in this guide will help cities of any size become more effective in telling their city story

Grassroots advocacy can be as simple as telling a story

Successful grassroots advocacy requires telling a story to the right people and at the right time in the process. Successful grassroots advocates know how to localize and personalize their story, and they coordinate their story with other like-minded individuals and entities.

Every city has interesting stories to tell. Stories about the services, solutions, and partnerships provided to meet local needs and respond to unique city circumstances for efficient, cost-effective _____ (parks, water, police and fire protection ... fill in the blank with any city service!).

By explaining the local impact of state and federal legislation, city officials can educate while they advocate for their city.

contents:

Part 1: City advocacy

Three easy steps to tell your city story.....	2
Take action now!	4
City advocacy takes many shapes.....	5
Advocacy checklist	Back cover

Part 2: The LMC Capitol Insider

10 tips to know before lobbying the Minnesota Legislature	6
Lobbying 101	8
Capitol area and LMC map	9

Part 3: Opportunities for involvement

LMC conferences and training	10
LMC policy committees.....	12
LMC City Policies.....	13
National League of Cities ..	14
NLC policy committees and core beliefs.....	15
NLC Grassroots Action Center	16
Your LMC legislative staff contacts and issue areas.....	Inside back cover

City advocacy



LMC's electronic publications and web site keep you informed

Three easy steps to tell your city story

In order to tell your city story, cities need to create a culture of enhanced public engagement. This requires a focused effort to educate state and federal lawmakers, the media, and the public about the services, solutions, and partnerships found in your city.

Step 1: Stay informed

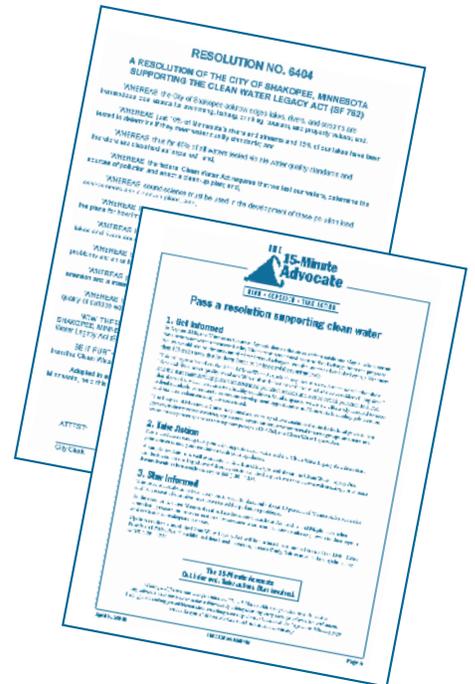
The League of Minnesota Cities provides several tools to help you stay up-to-date on the legislative issues that impact your city:

- Subscribe to an LMC legislative member forum (www.lmc.org/page/1/member-forums-signup/jsp).
- Read the *Cities Bulletin* newsletter, available electronically at no cost to members (www.lmc.org/page/1/cities-bulletin-newsletter.jsp).
- Become a 15-Minute Advocate in just minutes by receiving and responding to the action requests that appear weekly during the legislative session in the *Cities Bulletin* and LMC web site.
- Receive the *FridayFax*, a weekly League e-mail that summarizes legislative events and will turn readers into true “Capitol Insiders.” Sign up for the General Legislative member forum (at the link above) to receive the *FridayFax*.
- Attend the League’s State of the Cities Legislative Conference, any of the Regional Meetings held in cities across Minnesota, and the Annual Conference.
- Participate in one of four policy development committees, or review the LMC City Policies, available online at www.lmc.org/page/1/legislative-policies.jsp.
- Review new laws impacting cities by reading the annual *Law Summaries* www.lmc.org/page/1/law-summaries.jsp.
- Learn about city-friendly legislation before Congress, and how to take action through the National League of Cities “Grassroots Action Center,” online at: www.nlc.org.

Step 2: Educate while you advocate

City officials can use their local connections, knowledge, and credibility to personalize and localize complex legislative proposals. By explaining the local impact of state or federal legislation, city officials can educate while they advocate for their city. Personal relationships are the key to achieving legislative success, and it is important that elected and appointed city officials work to build positive relationships with state and federal lawmakers year-round.

- Invite your state and federal legislators to your City Hall. Ask them to speak at a council meeting and offer them tours of city facilities.
- Showcase your facilities and demonstrate to the media and legislators the importance of locally-provided services. Tell them who is served, how they are funded, and tell them about the solutions and partnerships your city created to provide those citizen services.
- Respond to LMC Action Alerts and *The 15-Minute Advocate*. Both Action Alert e-mails and *The 15-Minute Advocate* provide key information on timely policy issues. The goal is to provide information you can read, consider, and take action on in 15 minutes or less.



REQUEST AND RESPONSE

Example of a resolution in response to a *15-Minute Advocate* request.

Step 3: Relentlessly defend your city

Teaching lawmakers, the media, and the general public is your job. Remember that city officials have credibility, local knowledge, and expertise. American democracy rewards participation. Go out and represent and defend your city. Defend the ability of your city's residents to identify local needs and solutions through your city's duly-elected government structure. Tell your city story!

tip:

The question that city officials need to ask is, “who is making your city’s decisions?” Is it Congress? Is it the Minnesota Legislature? Or is it the responsibility of accountable, locally elected city officials?

Who knows best about the needs of your community, your City Council or Congress? Your City Council or the Legislature?

City advocacy

Take action now!

Everything from one call to your legislator to attending the League's City Day at the Capitol makes a difference. Listed below are several examples of the wide variety of city advocacy efforts. While none may exactly fit your city's needs and means, cities of any size can take parts of each of these ideas and implement them today in an effort to better tell their city story.

Advocating for cities can take on many shapes and sizes:

- Give tours of your city (on foot or by bus).
- Invite legislators to speak at your City Council meeting.
- Call, write or e-mail legislators throughout the year.
- Lobby at the Capitol in St. Paul or Washington, D.C.
- Coordinate your own City Day at the Capitol with local business and chambers of commerce leaders. Consider bussing citizens from your city to help spread the good news and to increase your visibility.
- Attend the LMC Legislative Conference.
- Inform area media of your advocacy efforts and localize your examples: write a column in your local newspaper, take calls on a local radio station, write an Internet blog, or discuss city priorities on local cable access.
- Partner with neighboring cities, towns, your county, and school districts.
- Respond to LMC Action Alerts and the *15-Minute Advocate*, and join the NLC Grassroots Action Center online at www.nlc.org.

tip:

If your city has a municipal liquor store, tell your citizens its purpose and benefits.

If your city is strapped for road maintenance funding, give your legislators a tour and show them the potholes and the busy intersections.

That's how you educate while you advocate. That's how you tell your city story.

City advocacy takes many shapes



TIMBERJAY NEWS Tower • Ely • Orr Minnesota
Weather Archives Real Estate Visitors Guide Home

Wednesday, May 03, 2006

Ely lobbies joint garage at Capitol

By Kevin Strauss

At a special meeting last week, the Community Development Joint Powers Board motion in support of the city of Ely/Sic. Louis County Joint Public Works Garage. I put together a team to lobby legislators in St. Paul, and that team hit the Capitol Hill.

The team included Ely Area Development Authority Board Member Jeff Sundell, LADA Board Member Jeff Thompson, and Ely City Administrator Ely Butler.

"Right now we are developing our talking points (legislative) conference committee members go down to St. Paul to visit with conference members and can be supportive to our causes."

Skraba, who has taken several trips to St. Paul, said he has a team down with a team.

"Every time I go to St. Paul, I go by myself when you go with a larger contingent, you have footprints going around the capital," said Skraba.

Skraba thinks that having Joint Powers help legislators that while this is a project that is benefits like lower maintenance costs for the government efficiency.

"Our job now is to work with our delegation. Some city councilors, however, were irked to inform councilors he would miss a regularly scheduled meeting."



THE NEW PRAGUE TIMES.com
New Prague, Minnesota U.S.A. Internet Edition

We're always in the hunt for stories
By Chuck Kajer, Managing Editor

Thursday, August 10, 2006

It was about a month ago that New Prague Fire Chief Jan Becker invited me, along with Mayor Craig Stadeland and City Administrator Jerry Dolansack, to put on gear and go with the department into a burning home with some firefighters. It was one of the more interesting stories I've done in 18 years in this business. It also took a month to get into the newspaper, since it was going up against ex-judicial events and other events. We needed to find the week when we had enough space for the story to run. That is this week.

Newspaper writers get to meet a lot of interesting people and do a lot of interesting things. Because of my job, I got to go through training on when a cop should or shouldn't shoot in certain situations. I got to climb to the top of the New Prague tower, as the invitation of former police followed the mass mobilization of a cop had a few shots left on my camera and...

With this job, I get to meet interesting people and do a lot of interesting things. Because of my job, I got to go through training on when a cop should or shouldn't shoot in certain situations. I got to climb to the top of the New Prague tower, as the invitation of former police followed the mass mobilization of a cop had a few shots left on my camera and...



brainerddispatch.com

Oberstar to visit Mille Lacs wastewater treatment plant

Friday, February 10, 2006

GARRISON - Rep. Jim Oberstar, D-Minn., will visit the Mille Lacs wastewater treatment plant in Garrison on Sunday afternoon.

The facility, which Oberstar visited in 2004 before its opening, has grown to serve nearly 5,000 residents and has the capacity to serve 10,000 residents, according to a spokesperson for the plant.

The Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe built the plant and paid for it through a bond issue. The Mille Lacs Lake Sanitary District to provide wastewater treatment for the plant.

Other area officials who were invited to attend the event included Mille Lacs Lake Sanitary District members of the sanitary district, Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, and other Mille Lacs Band officials.



Bemidji Day at the Capitol
March 28, 2006
Attendance Request Form
One per person please

Affiliation: _____

Fax: _____ E-mail: _____

(only for use at the Capitol)

Regarding the following projects:

_____ Bemidji State University & Northwest Technical College Facility Projects
_____ I would like to be a "lead" on legislative visits



ROCHESTER AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

3.22.06

Rochester on Tour at the Capitol

the magic of Rochester

Save the Date...

Rally with Rochester business leaders and community members in St. Paul on Wednesday, March 22, 2006 to promote Rochester at the 3rd Annual Rochester on Tour at the Capitol. Last year more than 70 legislators from across the state learned from over 400 citizens how important Rochester is to the economic vitality of the state. Rochester on Tour begins with buses departing mid-morning on March 22nd, arriving for lunch with legislative leaders at the Radisson Riverfront Hotel. Following lunch, we will join together at the Capitol Rotunda for a rally with our local legislative delegation. During the mid-afternoon hours, participants will have the opportunity to view legislative committee meetings, tour the Capitol complex, tour the Minnesota History Center, and visit with legislators. At 5:00 p.m., everyone will meet for the grand reception at the National Guard Armory, featuring food, music, and booth displays by our sponsors. The event will conclude at 7:00 p.m. with buses departing for Rochester shortly thereafter.

Schedule of Events...

10:00 a.m. - Buses depart Rochester (old Econo Foods North Parking Lot).

11:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. - Lunch at the Radisson Riverfront Hotel. Invited speakers include Governor Tim Pawlenty and House and Senate Leadership.

1:30 - 2:30 p.m. - Rally in the Capitol Rotunda.

2:30 - 5:00 p.m. - Watch legislature in action, tour the capitol, visit with legislators, tour the Minnesota History Center.

5:00 - 7:00 p.m. - Grand Reception at the National Guard Armory, 600 Cedar Street. Join local businesses and community members to promote our city to state legislators while enjoying Rochester food, beverages, and music.

7:30 p.m. - Buses depart St. Paul.

9:00 p.m. - Buses arrive in Rochester.

Event Cost... Lunch, Dinner, & Entertainment - \$25, Transportation - \$5, MN History Center Tour - \$6
FREE Transportation for Seniors (62 or older) and Students.

For more information or to register, visit www.rochestermnchamber.com or call 507-288-1122.
Registration Deadline: March 17, 2006.

Paysonville Press - May 17, 2006

Mayor's Comments

Two issues before legislature could affect city

By Jeff Thompson

Less than a week now before the legislature will need to adjourn. Seems to me there had been talk of adjourning early this year. I suppose that could still technically happen, but there is still a lot on the table.

Work on stadium proposals seems to have captured the spotlight. What were there now, at least two separate versions of at least three stadium proposals?

There are a couple of unfinished items of local interest. Those are joint powers liability limitations and eminent domain limits.

The bill on joint powers would not really do much to us as far as local government is concerned. It actually limits tort liability in the cases where such exists as a result of joint powers agreements.

It would appear the greatest affect this bill would have would be on limiting insurance claims against the city and possible reducing (or at least maybe not increasing) related portion of the city's insurance premium.

Eminent domain reform continues to march on. Eminent domain is a tool that this city has used quite sparingly, the airport being the only instance that I can recall. Most of the reform is targeted to the use of eminent domain for rehabilitation and redevelopment.

There are a couple of possibilities that come to mind when considering eminent domain as a development tool within the city. However, with new legislation pretty much a done deal, we'll have to consider other options should those possibilities arise. Property owners along any future Highway 23 route may, however, benefit from work done on the eminent domain process during this session.

The council has acted to reduce its short term city administrator candidate to one. As of this writing we are trying to set up a second interview with the applicant before proceeding with any decision. Please stand by.

Contact the author at editor@paysonvillepress.com • [Return to Viewpoint](#)

[Home](#) | [Marketplace](#) | [Community](#)

The LMC Capitol Insider

10 tips to know before lobbying the Minnesota Legislature

Whether you are an experienced Capitol Insider or new to city advocacy, lobbying before the Minnesota Legislature can be an intimidating experience. City officials coming to St. Paul can have a more productive experience armed with the 10 tips listed here.

- 10. Where do I park?** City officials can park for free at the LMC Building parking lot on the corner of University & Rice (always sign in at the LMC receptionist desk to avoid being towed). Several other public parking lots near the Capitol charge hourly rates.
- 9. Take the tunnel.** The Capitol is connected to the State Office Building (SOB), as well as the Judicial Center and other area buildings, by underground tunnels. Capitol Insiders stay warm and dry by taking the tunnels, which are accessible on the basement level of the Capitol and the ground level of the SOB.
- 8. Where do I get copies of bills?** Three places: the House Public Information Office in Room 175 SOB, the House Chief Clerk's Office in Room 211 Capitol, and the Senate Information Office in Room 231 Capitol. Each has free copies of bills and staff who can answer public inquiries about the legislative process. Bill status, text, and authors is also available online at: www.leg.state.mn.us.
- 7. Where are all the legislators?** During the session, legislators can be found in their offices, in committee, or in the House or Senate Chambers. House members and Republican senators have offices in the SOB. DFL senators have offices in the Capitol. House committee meetings are posted in Room 175 SOB and on bulletin boards on the first floor near the elevators in the SOB. Senate committee meetings are posted in Room 231 Capitol and on bulletin boards on the second floor of the Capitol near the Senate Chamber (and online).
- 6. Can I bother my legislators if they are in a floor session or a committee hearing?** Yes, sort of. The first step is to call ahead and schedule a meeting. If you learn that your legislator is in a committee meeting or floor session at the only time you are available, ask their staffer if the legislator could be briefly interrupted at the hearing or session. At floor sessions, you can ask House or Senate staffers outside the Chamber doors to pass a note to your legislator stating that you are there

and asking if they could break away for a minute or two so that you could speak with them. A page or intern will deliver your note to the legislator and they will step outside to visit if they are able. At committee hearings, you can ask committee pages (usually the ones handing out paper or running a tape recorder) to pass a note to your legislator stating that you are there to see them and asking if they could break away for a minute or two. Legislators will make every effort to meet with you, especially if they are expecting you and if they can break away from their hearing or the session for a few moments.

- 5. The media live in the basement.** Media from across the state have reporters who work in the basement of the Capitol. Walk into rooms B12, B28, or B22 to see if your hometown media is represented. Introduce yourself and tell them about your city-friendly legislative agenda.
- 4. Where's Jesse?** Gov. Ventura's portrait is located on the ground floor of the Capitol, near Room 15. Along with portraits of the other 36 governors, there are statues and busts of famous Minnesotans throughout the Capitol. One non-Minnesotan you'll see is the bust of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- 3. Often missed quiet spot.** Need a quiet place to wait, read or get online? The Legislative Reference Library, Room 645 SOB, is one of the Capitol Insider's best-kept secrets. Found on the sixth floor of the SOB, the quiet Legislative Reference Library features current and historic information on legislation and legislators, and is free and open to the public. For the wireless city advocates, more and more of the Capitol is wireless so log on and see if you can get a connection wherever you find yourself.
- 2. Get to know your State Capitol.** Guided tours of the Capitol are free and begin hourly at the information desk located on the first floor. Minnesota stone in the Capitol includes granite from St. Cloud, Rockville, and Ortonville; limestone from Winona, Kasota, and Mankato; and pipestone from Pipestone.
- 1. Breakfast, lunch, snacks, beverages, and a haircut.** The prime spot to eat and to run into senators is the Capitol basement cafeteria, called the Rathskeller. The Capitol also has a snack bar on the second floor known by some Capitol Insiders as "ulcer gulch," which is open during floor sessions. The next best place to eat breakfast or lunch, people-watch, and run into legislators and other state officials is the cafeteria in the nearby Mn/DOT headquarters building, which is also attached to the Capitol by the underground tunnels. The State Office Building has vending machines in the basement, as well as a public barbershop in Room B15 SOB.

tip:

If your city has a partnership with neighboring cities, your county or school district for shared-services, tell your local newspaper how much money those partnerships save your taxpayers. That's how you educate while you advocate. That's how you tell your city story.

The LMC Capitol Insider

Lobbying 101

This guide provides an outline for those who are usually being lobbied to become the lobbyist for their city and their citizens.

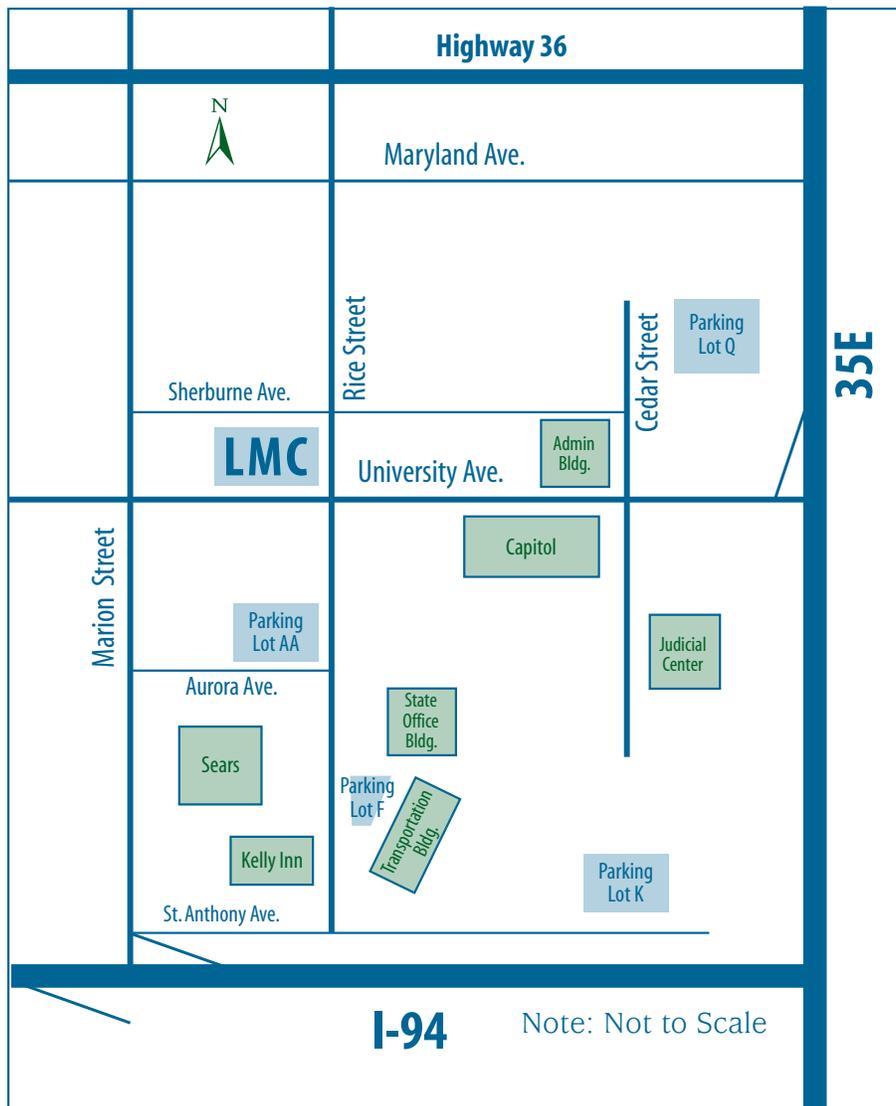
- **KISS principle—Keep It Short & Simple!** Your message should be brief, basic, and easy to understand. You may only have a few minutes to convey even a complex issue. Avoid using acronyms, inside baseball terms, and city-speak.
- **Localize and personalize it.** Every issue has a human face, a familiar location, and a story to tell. If you can't localize or personalize an issue, don't expect a legislator to be overly receptive.
- **Tell the truth.** Know the issue, know the facts, and never lie about an issue. If you don't have an answer, say so and offer to get an answer and get back with the information. Trust and reliability of your information is essential in working with elected officials.
- **Polite to the players.** Never underestimate the importance of staffers who are the prime sources of information for their bosses. Legislative staff provide institutional knowledge and often stick around longer than the elected officials.
- **Expectation management.** Know what your legislators can and cannot do for you. Reach for the stars, but prepare yourself for incremental change.
- **Connect the dots for them.** Identify the issue and why you care. Identify the actions you expect the elected official to take with your request.
- **Follow-up.** Always write a thank-you note and respond to any outstanding concerns or unanswered questions from your meeting. This brings closure to your meeting and sets a positive tone for your next meeting.

Maintaining a balance of local control within the structure of federal and state regulations requires constant vigilance by local officials and citizens to educate and advocate for local authority to provide services and solutions tailored to meet the needs of citizens in different cities facing unique circumstances.

Capitol area and LMC map

Your League of Minnesota Cities office is on the corner of University and Rice and has FREE parking for city officials visiting the State Capitol year around. Always register at the receptionist desk to avoid having your car tagged and towed.

Other Capitol-area public parking lots are shown in gray.



The League of Minnesota Cities building is located at 145 University Avenue West in St. Paul.

Opportunities for involvement

LMC conferences and training events

Whether you want to learn about a particular issue that's keeping you up at night or you want to connect with other city officials to exchange ideas, the League has a training opportunity for you. Stay up-to-date on critical issues, build skills, network, and provide feedback by participating in a variety of League conferences and trainings.

For notice of these and other opportunities for participation, watch the *Cities Bulletin*, *Minnesota Cities* magazine, or visit the LMC web site at: www.lmc.org.

- **Leadership Conference for Newly Elected Officials.** Annual event, typically held in January, February or March at several locations across Minnesota.
- **Leadership Conference for Experienced Elected Officials.** Annual event, typically held in January, February or March at several locations across Minnesota.
- **Legislative Conference and City Day at the Capitol.** Annual event, typically in late March, that brings elected and appointed city leaders together for policy updates, networking, a grassroots lobbying effort before state legislators at the State Capitol, and a fiscal conditions report on the State of the Cities.
- **LMC Annual Conference and Marketplace.** Annual conference, typically held in June, for city officials to learn, network, and participate in workshops, League business, setting city priorities, and more. This major event is hosted by a different city each year and features a marketplace/trade fair with a host of city vendors.
- **Regional Meetings.** Annual Regional Meetings offer city officials a mini-conference close to home. Typically held in the fall, cities host one of the half-day LMC Regional Meetings and invite city officials from near and far to meet, network, learn, and participate in discussions of current legislative, management, governance, and cost-saving issues and ideas with peers and colleagues.

- **Additional opportunities for participation.** The League has many opportunities for learning best practices, sharing ideas, and participating in improving municipal governance in Minnesota cities.
 - > Consider serving on the LMC Board of Directors or the nominating committee.
 - > Opportunities routinely arise to serve on temporary task forces or to represent the League and your municipal peers on state agency boards and advisory committees. The League publishes these opportunities as they are posted.
 - > The Annual Conference Planning Committee works to identify themes, topics, presenters, and other details for the Annual Conference. Contact Laura Harris at lharris@lmc.org or (651) 281-1251 for more information.
 - > Safety workshops, loss control trainings, and seminars occur throughout the year in locations across the state.
 - > Affiliate organizations regularly meet to pursue pro-city agendas, including city attorneys, city engineers, city clerks, finance officers, city managers, mayors, and many others.
 - > Consider serving on the LMC Insurance Trust Board of Trustees.
 - > Join one of the LMC policy committees. More information can be found on the next page!

tip:

Know the rules, know the players.

- > **LMC's *Handbook for Minnesota Cities* is the most comprehensive reference on city government available. Know the rules of city governance and authority found in either the online (free) or print (for fee) versions of the *Handbook*.**
- > **LMC's *Directory of Minnesota City Officials* is updated annually and is the most comprehensive source of elected and appointed city officials. Know the players in city government found in either the online (free) or print (for fee) version of the *Directory*.**

Opportunities for involvement

LMC policy committees

The League's policy development process begins each summer with meetings of the legislative policy committees. City officials interested in helping shape League legislative policy should consider joining one of the four policy committees.

Each committee meets several times in late summer and early fall to propose and discuss city policies that are then considered for adoption by the LMC Board of Directors. All member cities are advised of the committee policy proposals before Board consideration, and have the opportunity to offer comments and suggestions. The four policy committees are:

- **Improving Fiscal Futures Committee.** This committee concentrates on municipal financial management, property and other taxes, state aid programs, and financial reporting requirements.
- **Improving Local Economies Committee.** This committee handles issues such as growth management, land use, boundary adjustments, housing, transportation, economic development, and telecommunications.
- **Improving Service Delivery Committee.** This committee focuses on environmental mandates, elections, ethics, open meetings and data privacy, government innovation and cooperation.
- **Human Resources & Data Practices.** This committee considers issues such as employment law, labor relations, data practices, and pensions.

A city can have more than one member serving on a committee; however, each city can have only one voting member on a policy committee.

League members can participate in the policy development process by joining a policy committee, sharing comments and concerns with the League's intergovernmental relations staff, and attending the Annual Conference and Regional Meetings.

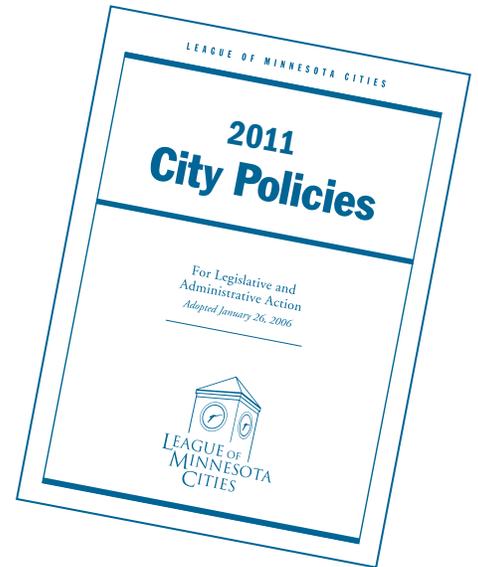
Those interested in joining should contact Heather Cederholm at hcederholm@lmc.org or (651) 281-1256.

LMC City Policies

The *City Policies* document addresses more than 100 legislative issues that impact cities and serves as the foundation of League advocacy efforts. Policies are considered, discussed, and revised annually—with considerable member input. City officials from across the state recommend policies in one of four policy committees. Draft policies are published online and distributed to cities for comments before being considered for approval by the LMC Board of Directors.

There are several ways for League members to participate in the formation of the *City Policies*.

- Join one of the four LMC policy committees.
- Contact LMC intergovernmental relations staff (see inside back cover), and share your ideas and suggestions.
- Send in your comments on the form below.



City Policies are updated and published annually.

LEAGUE OF MINNESOTA CITIES

Legislative Policy Comments

This is your chance to get involved in the League's policy development process! Your comments and suggestions will be shared with the LMC Board of Directors before they approve the new City Policies. Please complete this card and return it to LMC in one of the ways listed below. Thank you for your comments.

CITY _____ TITLE _____

NAME _____ PHONE/EMAIL _____

POLICY / POLICY NUMBER(S) _____

COMMENTS _____

Several convenient ways to share your comments with LMC

- **Fax to:** (651) 215-4113
- **Mail to:** LMC Policies
- **E-mail to:** policycomments@lmc.org
- **Call or e-mail an IGR staff member** (contact information is on page 17 of this guide).

Opportunities for involvement

National League of Cities

■ **Annual meetings.** The National League of Cities (NLC) conducts two national conventions annually—the Congress of Cities and Exposition, which is held in November or December in a different city each year; and the Congressional City Conference, which is held each March in Washington, D.C.

> **The Congress of Cities and Exposition** serves as NLC’s “annual convention” and offers a broad range of learning opportunities combined with conducting organizational business. This conference is unique in that it partners with the host city to develop educational programs that allow the city to display its accomplishments. Through mobile workshops (off-property educational sessions), spouse/guest tours (opportunities to visit showcase venues), and a variety of other resources, delegates are offered a chance to explore the city for its educational value. This is the only NLC conference with an exposition. The expo is one of the largest exhibits for companies serving municipal needs.

> **The Congressional City Conference** is NLC’s annual legislative conference designed to inform local officials about federal priorities affecting cities and towns, and initiate NLC’s grass-roots advocacy work with the current Congress and administration. Delegates end the conference by meeting with the Minnesota congressional delegation.

■ **Additional NLC opportunities for participation.** NLC also offers a variety of focused seminars and conferences throughout the year to help local officials examine emerging issues, develop new skills, and connect with other local officials from across the country. All conference and seminars are offered on a fee basis and require separate registration forms that must be completed before the event. Special reduced registration fees are offered to city officials from NLC member cities.

tip:

For more information on NLC opportunities, visit: www.nlc.org and click on “Inside NLC.”

NLC membership note: Your city must be a Direct Member City of NLC to serve on NLC committees and panels. If you need additional information or would like to apply for any of these opportunities, please contact Donyelle Mikacevich at dmikacevich@lmc.org or (651) 281-1202; or Kevin Frazell at kfrazell@lmc.org or (651) 281-1215.

NLC policy committees and core beliefs

Several NLC committees deal with development of legislative policy:

- Community and Economic Development
- Energy, Environment & Natural Resources
- Finance, Administration & Intergovernmental Relations
- Human Development
- Information, Technology & Communications
- Public Safety & Crime Prevention
- Transportation Infrastructure & Services

The committees are divided into two parts. The policy committees meet at the Congressional City Conference in Washington to set the broad agenda of issues for the year. They then meet again at the Congress of Cities (location moves around the country) to adopt final policy recommendations. The League is entitled to make up to five appointments to each of the seven policy committees.

The steering committees are a smaller subset of the policy committees, and meet twice between March and the fall Congress of Cities to study issues in depth and develop specific policy recommendations and language. The work of the steering committees is then considered for ratification by the full policy committee at the Congress of Cities meeting. Appointment to the steering committees is by NLC leadership, but with significant input from state leagues.

Core beliefs of the National League of Cities

We believe in:

- Representative, participatory local government.
- Local government as the cornerstone of government in the United States.
- The value of public service.
- The value of diversity throughout our organization and our communities.
- Municipal authority over municipal issues.
- A commitment to the highest ethical standards among public officials.
- Civility and mutual respect.
- Anticipating the needs of communities and developing strategies to meet those needs and improve the quality of life.
- Partnerships, coalitions, and collaborations to strengthen cities and our advocacy efforts.

Opportunities for involvement

NLC Legislative Action Center

Become an advocate for cities across the nation. The National League of Cities has created a dynamic Field Operations Program to organize and implement grassroots efforts nationwide.

You can access NLC advocacy tools in the NLC Legislative Action Center at www.nlc.org. For further information contact NLC's Federal Relations and Field Operations staff at 202-626-3020.

tip:

The National League of Cities Legislative Action Center helps you get informed and take action quickly by clicking on headlines. Create your own profile to send instant messages to Congress.

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
Strengthening & promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance

Search go

About Cities | Advocating For Cities | Resources For Cities | Inside NLC | Conferences & Training | Newsroom

Nation's Cities Weekly
Official Publication of NLC

SPOTLIGHT: Local Officials Unveil Report Illustrating Impact of CDBG Program

City and county officials released a preliminary report prepared by IHS Global Insight Inc., that clearly demonstrates that the Community Development Block Grant program yields both direct and indirect economic benefits. NLC, the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties released the report at an event on Capitol Hill. Full Press Release

View the event on NLC TV

National League of Cities CONGRESSIONAL CITY CONFERENCE
Marriott Wardman Park Hotel
Washington, DC March 12-14

Topics

- Finance & Economic Development
- Government
- Housing
- Infrastructure
- Sustainability
- Youth, Education & Families
- Public Safety
- Technology & Communications
- Equity & Inclusiveness
- Immigration

Join NLC!

City Membership Corporate Program
NLC Online Store

Member City Gresham, OR

City Supplier Directory
Find what you need for your city

The Mayors' ACTION CHALLENGE for Children and Families

Links to State Leagues

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES
Strengthening & promoting cities as centers of opportunity, leadership, and governance

Search go

About Cities | Advocating For Cities | Resources For Cities | Inside NLC | Conferences & Training | Newsroom | Topics

Home: Advocating for Cities: Advocacy

In this Section

- Federal Lobbying Priorities
- Federal Relations Updates
- Legal Advocacy Activities
- Advocacy
- National Municipal Policy

Join NLC

NLC ACTION ALERT: Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

On February 19, the House passed a spending bill (H.R. 1) to fund government for the remainder of FY 2011 that calls for an unthinkable 62.5 percent or \$2.5 billion cut to CDBG.

NLC continues to work in partnership with the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National Association of Counties in Washington to push for full funding for the CDBG program in both the FY 2011 spending bill and for FY 2012. But this battle will not be won in Washington. It will happen in your cities and towns, and we need you to take action.

We urge you to contact your Representatives and Senators and tell them the good that CDBG does in their district and state. Invite them to visit projects that could not have been accomplished without CDBG funding. Introduce them to constituents who have jobs in your neighborhoods because of CDBG. Show them the vital services that will disappear if CDBG is eliminated. And engage your Governor, who receives 30 percent of the CDBG funding to distribute to smaller communities, in this campaign.

In addition to the advocacy materials provided at the right, also available are testimonials and presentations from your colleagues across the country. See how fellow cities and towns have taken action to prevent cuts to CDBG, and please share your own stories with NLC.

CDBG in the Media

CDBG Letters

- Avondale, Arizona
- San Leandro, California
- Kankakee, Illinois

Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities, U.S. Senator Robert Casey

To help you fight the CDBG battle in your community, NLC has developed a packet of information and sample documents to educate your members of Congress on the effectiveness of CDBG in your community.

CDBG Action Checklist

- One-page CDBG Issue Brief
- One-page CDBG Fact Sheet
- Sample CDBG letter to your Representative or Senator
- Sample CDBG media advisory and press release

Your LMC legislative staff contacts and issues areas

The League's intergovernmental relations staff serves as daily, year-round representatives of Minnesota cities at the Capitol. They follow myriad municipal issues, ensuring city positions are on the table when the 2,000-plus laws are churned through the legislative system each year.

Jim Miller, Executive Director
(651) 281-1205 jmiller@lmc.org

Gary Carlson, Intergovernmental Relations Director
(651) 281-1255 gcarlson@lmc.org

- Aid to cities
- Civil liability
- Insurance
- Pensions and post retirement benefits
- Property tax system
- Public finance

Anne Finn, Assistant Intergovernmental Relations Director
(651) 281-1263 afinn@lmc.org

- Emergency management
- Pensions
- Personnel
- Public safety
- Transportation

Ann Higgins, Intergovernmental Relations Representative
(651) 281-1257 ahiggins@lmc.org

- Cable franchising
- Elections and redistricting
- Housing
- Information policy
- Right-of-way management
- Telecommunications
- Underground locating
- Utility service districts
- Water/wastewater billing

Craig Johnson, Intergovernmental Relations Representative
(651) 281-1259 cjohnson@lmc.org

- Building Codes
- Energy
- Environment
- Land use and annexation
- Local/tribal relations
- State bonding
- Sustainable Development
- Wastewater, drinking water and stormwater

Jennifer O'Rourke, Intergovernmental Relations Representative
(651) 281-1261 jorourke@lmc.org

- Aid to cities
- Tax increment financing
- Economic development/redevelopment
- Public finance
- General government
- General revenue sources for cities
- Property tax system

Heather Cederholm, Member Outreach Coordinator
(651) 281-1256 hcederholm@lmc.org

- Policy committees
- Legislative listserv
- Grassroots member advocacy
- Policy development process

City advocacy checklist

Our city is actively involved in the pursuit of city-friendly legislative outcomes and engages our legislators, local media, and our citizens in providing efficient, cost-effective, dependable city services. This advocacy checklist notes just some of the grassroots efforts in the City of _____.

- Our city actively engages partners with similar interests, including neighboring cities, counties, local media, civic groups, and our citizens to help tell our city story.
- Our city has a clear set of legislative goals for the year that have been presented to our state legislators, local media, civic groups, and citizens.
- Our city is familiar with and has attached a copy of the *City Policies* guide of legislative goals for all Minnesota cities, as published by the League of Minnesota Cities, along with our city's legislative agenda.
- Our city regularly invites our state and federal legislators to City Hall to provide a local update on legislative activities.
- The last time State Senator _____ visited City Hall was _____.
- The last time State Representative _____ visited City Hall was _____.
- The last time one of our U.S. Senators visited City Hall was _____.
- The last time our U.S. Representative visited City Hall was _____.
- Our city receives regular legislative updates from the League of Minnesota Cities in the form of the *Cities Bulletin* and *Friday-Fax* publications.
- Our city responds to Action Alerts and *The 15-Minute Advocate* calls-to-action.
- Our city regularly considers resolutions supporting city-friendly legislation and opposing bills that would hurt the local-state partnership, and we share those resolutions with our legislators, local media, civic groups, citizens, and the League of Minnesota Cities.
- Our city has a say in the municipal agenda of the League of Minnesota Cities through active participation in LMC policy committees, Regional Meetings, the Annual Conference, and the Legislative Conference and City Day at the Capitol.

Through these actions and others, our city is seeking to improve the many partnerships between local government and our counterparts in state and federal government. Our city shares the goals of all cities across Minnesota in our effort to provide efficient, cost-effective services, solutions, and partnerships to the residents of our city.