

## MESSAGE FROM DAN GILMARTIN

### Recapping a Year Like No Other – State of Your League Report

Without a doubt, 2020 will go down as a year unlike any other in modern memory. A global pandemic, racial unrest following the tragic murder of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police officers, and a presidential election that culminated in a riot at the U.S. Capitol.

Behind the dramatic scenes and shocking headlines, the Michigan Municipal League has actively and persistently served and assisted you—our members. In this annual report, we take a step back to look at where we've been as an organization and where we're going to best serve the membership.

In the past year, we responded to our members' needs by launching our Community Wealth Building initiative; establishing resource pages related to COVID-19, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; fighting for legislation to help our communities function during the pandemic; and offering upward of 100 informative and educational virtual webinars and trainings for the membership.

I couldn't be prouder of our staff and what we were able to accomplish in 2020. What I've seen from our staff and our member communities gives me hope for 2021 as we focus on helping our communities recover from the pandemic, address racial disparities, and emerge even stronger together.

*Daniel P. Gilmartin*

League Executive Director and CEO

## WHO MAKES UP THE LEAGUE?

**523 Total Members:**  
279 Cities, **240 Villages**,  
4 Townships, 30 Affiliate  
Organizations, **51 Business**  
**Alliance Program Participants**

## EDUCATING AND ENGAGING OUR MEMBERS

The COVID pandemic has caused all of us to respond differently, and the League's many program offerings and events are certainly an example of this. When the coronavirus hit, we reimagined everything we do. Our priority became disseminating critical information related to COVID-19, as well as Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion awareness as public tensions grew over racial inequities and injustice. Thanks to the steadfast commitment from all of you, we transformed our in-person conferences and trainings into successful virtual offerings. Our popular Women's Municipal Leadership program through our 16/50 Project, for example, was converted into an online five-month training opportunity that allowed us to reach participants who may have otherwise been unable to attend. We also provided a dynamic 2020 virtual Convention, a series of online trainings for our Newly Elected Officials, and web-based weekend instruction through our Elected Officials Academy. Details: [1650project.org](http://1650project.org), [eo.org](http://eo.org), [mml.org](http://mml.org) and [mml.org/events/calendar.htm](http://mml.org/events/calendar.htm).

## ADVOCACY

Especially during a pandemic, the League's legislative advocacy efforts on behalf of our members is a core function of the organization. When COVID-19 hit in March of 2020, we leaped into action by advocating for legislation that allowed our communities to operate in safe and healthy ways, and for laws to protect the businesses and residents of our communities most vulnerable to the coronavirus. We successfully negotiated for changes to the Open Meetings Act that allowed local municipalities to conduct public meetings remotely. And we addressed other COVID issues for our members and their communities tied to creating social districts, employee protections to coronavirus exposure, water shutoffs, and securing over \$300 million in stimulus funding from the state's federal CARES allocation. We also were able to stop multiple bills that would have harmed our communities, including numerous property tax exemptions, preemption proposals around zoning and regulation of aggregate mining, short-term rentals, and large foster care facilities.

During the current legislative session, we are working to assist our communities in the economic recovery from COVID-19 in ways that leave no one behind. Municipal finance reform is more important to tackle now than at any point since the Great Recession. Our shoreline communities continue to struggle with the impacts of high-water levels on their residents and infrastructure. We continue to defend against one-size-fits-all proposals that seek to preempt local control. Housing and workforce needs remain a focus in communities across the state. And we continue to pursue additional meaningful federal support to fight the pandemic, replacing lost revenues, and investing in our communities.

Communities large and small are the heartbeat of our state, and yet they are where Michigan's economic recovery outlook hangs by a thread. Our communities must be a focus of the state and federal government's COVID recovery planning. Our communities entered the pandemic wounded by years of disinvestment. The tax structure that raises the money to pay for police, infrastructure, and other important services is overly reliant on a property tax system that knocks down revenue when times are bad and keeps it from rising with the economy when times are better. The League will continue to do all we can to advocate for change that assists our communities, families, and businesses in emerging from the pandemic even stronger.

**"The League has helped our member communities get through one of the most difficult periods of time in recent memory. Great leaders step up in times of crisis and the MML has been the epitome of that."**

**WILLIAM WILD,**  
2020-21 LEAGUE PRESIDENT, WESTLAND MAYOR

## COMMUNITY WEALTH BUILDING

Equitable. Resilient. Adaptable. Sustainable. These are the tenants of Community Wealth Building—a framework the League is developing to help guide our communities to greater economic and social prosperity. This evolving framework provides communities with strategies for safeguarding their people and places against the hard edges of national and global forces, while providing solutions aimed at increasing trust and a sense of belonging among residents. Community Wealth Building occurs when community leaders, partners, and local residents collaborate to develop equitable, resilient, adaptable, sustainable places that improve the human experience. Learn more at [mml.org/building-community-wealth](http://mml.org/building-community-wealth).



## SaveMICity

The SaveMICity initiative is the League's ongoing effort to reform our state's broken system for funding its communities. All along, this effort has been a marathon, not a sprint. Change is hard and it takes time. But it is happening. With your continued help, SaveMICity can show the public and decision makers how the local programs everyone values are funded, and what steps are needed to fix the current issues caused by this broken system. Join the effort and learn more at [SaveMICity.org](http://SaveMICity.org).



1,248,494 page views

Instagram

776 followers

facebook

5,068 Followers



## MML FOUNDATION

The Michigan Municipal League Foundation supports innovative work through partnerships, grants, and programming that creatively and intentionally bring people together and build community wealth. We also provide fiscal sponsorship and project support in Michigan Municipal League member communities. Visit [mmlfoundation.org](http://mmlfoundation.org) to learn more and make your gift to support community wealth building.

## POLICY RESEARCH LABS

Every industry needs research and development (R&D) to grow and find new solutions. That is the role the League's Policy Research Labs serves for Michigan's municipal enterprises. We strive to help our communities be authentic and welcoming places. Our team of local government scientists and policy wonks are consistently researching, testing, and developing new approaches to community wealth building, civic engagement, placemaking, redevelopment, and sustainability to share with community leaders like you. Whether it's providing best practice models on these topics, creating new local policy tools, or sharing information on future trends that impact your communities, we are here to help. Learn more about our work and how our team can help you at [placemaking.mml.org](http://placemaking.mml.org).



## DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

We must listen. We must engage. We must act. The senseless deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and countless others have resulted in protests throughout our nation and put the issues of police brutality and racial injustice at the forefront of our national dialogue. Citizens throughout the country are demanding that their governments combat brutality, inequity, and racial intolerance in all their forms. Local officials must seize this moment. It is our responsibility as community leaders to respond to our residents through meaningful change. The League has created a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion resource page to support our members as we move together toward a better understanding of racial injustice in our communities, and our role in correcting it. Contact our DE&I team at [deiteam@mml.org](mailto:deiteam@mml.org) and visit [mml.org/dei](http://mml.org/dei).



## LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

The League's Legal Defense Fund has continued to participate in cases affecting our members. Among many important cases, the LDF participated in *Taxpayers for Michigan Constitutional Government v. State of Michigan*, which is addressing the formula calculation used by the State of Michigan to determine whether a tax is local or state for purposes of the Headlee Amendment. In addition, the LDF filed a brief in *Bisio v. Clarkston*, which dealt with the office of city attorney in a local charter.

The LDF has served members' interests since 1983. Our advocacy has resulted in requests from the Michigan Supreme Court to provide briefs on key legal issues affecting municipalities. These briefs explain the importance of a case from the municipal perspective. The briefs often provide the court with the practical effects of their rulings. Your support of these efforts continues to make legal advocacy for cities and villages more effective.

For more information on the LDF, please visit [mml.org/legal/legal\\_defense\\_fund.htm](http://mml.org/legal/legal_defense_fund.htm).

## LEGAL DEFENSE FUND (LDF)

37

Active years

82+

Percent participation among League members

26

Cases for which the Supreme Court specifically requested a Municipal League amicus brief!

## OVER 2 MILLION

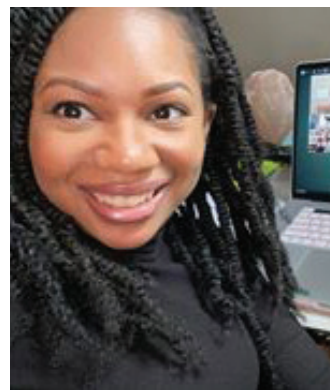
Amount spent in last 10 years helping member communities defend cases of state-wide significance

400+

Amicus briefs filed in the Michigan Supreme Court and Court of Appeals

#1 VICTORY

Michigan Supreme Court unanimously upheld Lansing's local authority to enact a prevailing wage ordinance



## MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

Did you know that our Membership Engagement department has created a guide to League benefits so you can learn all that we have to offer? We can also do a presentation at your next council meeting, so reach out and get connected. For more information, contact Kelly Warren, director of membership and affiliate engagement, at [kwarren@mml.org](mailto:kwarren@mml.org) or 734.669.6310.

"The League's training programs were there for me in my first year as a newly elected official, and the education I received was a tremendous help for me in serving my community."

ERNESTINE LYONS, COUNCILMEMBER, HARPER WOODS

## RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

### Liability & Property Pool, Workers' Compensation Fund, Unemployment Fund



Pool member contributions  
**\$24 million**

Workers' Compensation Fund  
**\$34 million**

Unemployment Fund Contributions  
**\$500,000**

Since 1978, more than \$280 million returned to members in dividends



Pool annual new claims  
**1,150**

Workers' Comp Fund Annual New Claims  
**2,250**

Unemployment Fund Annual Claims  
**3,000**



Pool assets  
**\$93 million**

Workers' Comp Fund Assets  
**\$180 million**

Unemployment Fund Assets  
**\$12 million**



Pool member equity  
**\$53 million**

Workers' Comp Fund Member Equity  
**\$93 million**

Unemployment Fund Member Equity  
**\$11 million**

*Stable, cost-effective risk management programs*

## MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE 2020/2021 Board of Trustees

### PRESIDENT

William Wild, Mayor, Westland

### VICE PRESIDENT

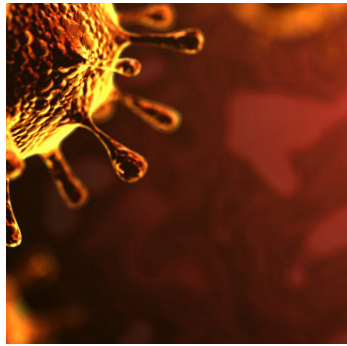
Dr. Deirdre Waterman, Mayor, Pontiac

### TRUSTEES

Michael Cain, City Manager, Boyne City  
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Robert Clark, Mayor, Monroe  
Peter Dame, City Manager, Grosse Pointe  
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### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & CEO

Daniel P. Gilmartin



## COVID RESOURCES

Cities and villages are on the front lines of responding to the outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in their community. The League is committed to providing local leaders with the necessary tools and resources to ensure communities are well equipped to navigate the pandemic. We created a COVID resource page for our communities at [mml.org/coronavirus](https://mml.org/coronavirus) with all the latest news, information, and links.

## CROWDFUNDING

The League is an active participant in the Public Spaces Community Places initiative with the Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Patronicity, and other partners. This effort assists local residents to use crowdfunding to support strategic projects in their communities. Learn more at [crowdfundingmi.com](https://crowdfundingmi.com).

**CROWDFUNDING MI**  
Invest on Main Street



**"It's easy for me to work with the MML because we both believe in the same thing—that our communities are the economic drivers of our state."**

**STATE SENATOR  
JEREMY MOSS**

(D-SOUTHFIELD)

## INQUIRY SERVICE/ RESOURCES

Our Inquiry Service serves as an information clearinghouse, helping steer communities through the complexities of local governance. We've created new resource pages on high-interest topics of COVID-19 and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. We are home to one-of-a-kind, searchable services, including our pay and benefits survey, and electronic labor contract library. We also have an extensive library of sample ordinances, policies, contracts, handbooks, and fact sheets on core municipal topics, such as social districts, residency for elected officials, and county tax reimbursements. We're continually updating information on recreation and medical marijuana, including sharing sample resolutions and ordinances from various communities. Let us know what you need: 1.800.653.2483 or [info@mml.org](mailto:info@mml.org).

## We love where you live.

The Michigan Municipal League is dedicated to making Michigan's communities better by thoughtfully innovating programs, energetically connecting ideas and people, actively serving members with resources and services, and passionately inspiring positive change for Michigan's greatest centers of potential: its communities.



## MML HANDBOOKS

These handbooks are essential reading material for both new and veteran elected and appointed in cities and both general law and home rule villages.