



# THE STATE OF YOUR LEAGUE

## MESSAGE FROM DAN GILMARTIN

### Welcome to our 2016/17 Annual State of the League Report

It has been an exciting, and productive year! Significant resources and effort are designated for the saveMlcity initiative, which was launched in March 2016 at the League's Capital Conference. This is an ongoing major legislative and policy push to enable a renewed investment in our communities. We have also been exploring new approaches to our placemaking, civic engagement, and crowdfunding programs. Our educational programming continues to thrive, and the Risk Management team is among the best, providing outstanding, cost-effective programs.

Although it's important to review and reflect on the past, the League's story is constantly evolving. In the upcoming year, we plan to advance creative ideas for funding local government, with new strategies to "change the rules."

We have welcomed many new faces to our staff this past year, adding to our already outstanding team. We are eager to stretch imaginations to break new ground in strengthening our programs and policies so that we can continue to work with you to bring the highest level of benefits to our membership.

For more details on our programs and services, check out our website at [www.mml.org](http://www.mml.org).

Enjoy!

League Executive Director and CEO



## WHO MAKES UP THE LEAGUE?

**520 Cities, Villages, & Townships:** 278 Cities, 239 VILLAGES, 7 Grant/Non-Voting Members, 31 Affiliate Organizations, 85 Business Alliance Program Participants

"It has been an honor and pleasure to serve as the League's President this past year. I always knew it was a quality organization, but I have seen it grow and expand in ways I could not have imagined. The municipal finance reform effort is a great example, with remarkable progress made since 2016. I am eager to see where the League leads us next."

**ROSALYNN BLISS, 2016-2017 LEAGUE PRESIDENT, MAYOR OF GRAND RAPIDS**

## EDUCATING OUR MEMBERS

Our *You Need to Know!* events allow us to bring key topics and expert speakers out to your region. These free member events also feature a networking hour so you can connect with presenters and other local leaders.

"I had the opportunity to work with the League on an issue involving cost sharing on road projects between the state and local communities. It was a complicated topic with multiple layers, but in the end a successful solution was reached. The League staff is always tremendous to work with even in complex situations with many viewpoints."

**MARTY KNOLLENBERG (R-TROY)**

## ADVOCACY: MUNICIPAL FINANCE REFORM

Our advocacy efforts focus on municipal finance reform with the backdrop of providing the necessary resources for communities to invest in themselves. We have developed programming and ideas that will drive economic development and build the kinds of places that residents demand, while attracting and retaining a talented 21st century work force.

In keeping with this agenda, we are heavily invested in working with the Legislature and Administration on long-term, comprehensive solutions to fix our state's broken municipal finance system with policies that call for investment in the places and services that will attract employers and a talented workforce.

We are working to raise awareness of the fiscal problems that communities of all sizes are facing; engaging in research that validates this concern; and educating the media and public about this critical issue. Our goal is to promote legislative solutions that reduce local government cost drivers; diversify revenue options; and promote structural reforms to help deliver services more cost-effectively and efficiently.

Our legislative efforts the past year have followed this core theme. From our successful advocacy to significantly reduce local cost sharing on MDOT road projects, to the first statutory revenue sharing increase for cities and villages in three years, we are committed to improving the financial stability of our members. Through our previous intervention negotiating for specific, guaranteed dollar amounts within the new personal property tax system, League members received a larger-than-expected first reimbursement this past year.

We continue to support new, innovative economic development programs and constantly work to protect our existing tools and prevent further erosion of local control. The coming months will bring challenges as Congress considers budget, tax, and infrastructure proposals that will have direct impacts on local government. In Lansing, legislators look to preempt local zoning of short-term rentals; establish new rules for lead and copper in water systems; and further reduce taxes on businesses, cutting into the local tax base.

Through these efforts, we continue to be recognized as a leading advocate for local government in Lansing.

## saveMIcity

We launched the saveMIcity municipal finance reform initiative in 2016. The aim is to broaden the understanding of the public, the business community, legislators, and the media that the state's system for funding our communities is horribly broken and needs to be fixed.

We stress the critical importance of great places in a strong economy, as one cannot exist without the other. In the last 18 months, we have given more than 50 presentations in all corners of the state to dozens of communities and thousands of people and we have received over 800 media hits. While these are great indicators of our progress, there is still work to be done.

We have been advocating around three pillars for change: revenues, cost containment, and the structure of service delivery. We believe that this strategy will best position our members and our state for the future. We will continue our advocacy, education, and outreach efforts this legislative session. We have bill drafts prepared around most of our policy ideas, and are hopeful that we will see introduction of these bills in 2017 or 2018.

Want to help? Join us at [saveMIcity.org](http://saveMIcity.org) and have our initiative present in your area by emailing us at [savemicity@mml.org](mailto:savemicity@mml.org).



1,492,106 page views

facebook

3,212 League Likes



## PLACEMAKING AND REDEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Our Civic Innovation Labs team is busy finding, researching, testing, and developing new approaches to civic engagement, placemaking, and redevelopment to share with community leaders. Our recent focus has been helping our members work with property owners and businesses to redevelop key sites that are vacant or underutilized. With the support of MSHDA, we established template documents and processes that communities can use to market their sites to developers. MEDC designated us their “subject matter experts” on site redevelopment and we are training members on how to make the most of their Redevelopment Ready Communities® certification program. We also provide technical assistance to members tackling blight through the Michigan Vacant Properties Campaign. Learn more about all these programs and how we can assist you at [placemaking.mml.org](http://placemaking.mml.org).



## MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

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.

## LEGAL DEFENSE FUND

Since 1983, our Legal Defense Fund (LDF) has effectively represented the interests of our member communities in state and federal appellate courts and state and federal administrative agencies. The LDF supports your cases by filing “amicus briefs”—literally friend of the court briefs—written by experts in that area of the law. Over 400 have been filed, for an expenditure of more than \$1 million. By helping you win your case, all League members benefit from briefs that focus on the state-wide importance of the issues at bar, and decisions that benefit all municipalities.

Of course, not all cases are “wins,” but the LDF impact is formidable and favorable. And, the Michigan Supreme Court now routinely specifically requests the League to file a brief. Typical cases involve municipal liability, property taxes, local zoning and billboard control, assessment of big box stores, medical marihuana, and preservation of local control. In relation to the last topic, the LDF, in support of Lansing, scored perhaps its most important victory last year when the Michigan Supreme Court unanimously underscored an interpretation of our Constitution to support broad authority of a city to enact an ordinance, although controversial to some, because it is a matter of *local* concern.

## LEGAL DEFENSE FUND (LDF)

The League’s Legal Defense Fund provides support to LDF member communities in cases that have a statewide impact.

34

Active years

75+

Percent participation among League members

22

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

## LEAGUE FOUNDATION

Local elected and appointed officials have the skills they need to better serve their communities, thanks to your ongoing support of the MML Foundation.

Your investment in the Foundation’s Tim Doyle Scholarship allowed newly elected officials to attend the Elected Officials Academy Weekender training, where they got critical information to help them make the best decisions for their communities.

Five others will get the knowledge and skills they need to lead and govern through the newly created John Barr Leadership Education Scholarship.

Launched in 2017, the scholarship was initially funded through a generous \$10,000 investment from MML Foundation Board Member and Ypsilanti City Attorney John Barr, and matching donations from League members, Foundation board members, and DTE Energy.

The MML Foundation also continued to support our members’ and our efforts—from building partnerships to securing funding for projects that create and maintain thriving communities.

For more information or to donate, visit [mmlfoundation.org](http://mmlfoundation.org).

## OVER 1 MILLION

Amount spent in last 6 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

twitter 5,447 League Followers

flickr™ 3.5 million views  
9,789 average daily views

## RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

### Liability & Property Pool Workers' Compensation Fund



Pool member contributions  
**\$20 million**

Workers' Compensation Fund  
**\$30 million**

Since 1978, more than \$240 million returned to members in dividends



Pool annual new claims  
**1,000**

Fund annual new claims  
**2,500**



Pool assets  
**\$80 million**

Fund assets  
**\$145 million**



Pool member equity  
**\$50 million**

Fund member equity  
**\$60 million**

*Stable, cost-effective risk management programs*

## MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE 2016/2017 Board of Trustees

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## CROWDFUNDING

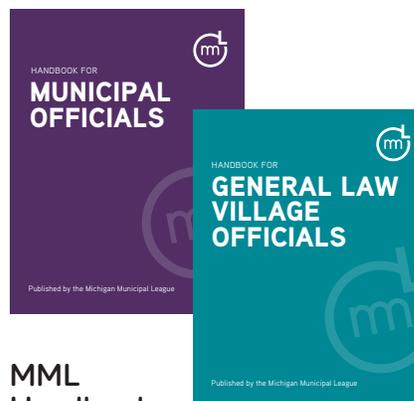
Michigan is a trendsetter when it comes to creative use of crowdfunding, and the rest of the country is starting to take notice. *Public Spaces, Community Places*, the League-supported civic crowdfunding program that is funded by MEDC and uses the Patronicity platform, was recognized in 2017 by the Harvard Kennedy School for Government as a leading Innovation in American Government. Two other states have already replicated the program, which has now funded over 120 projects worth more than \$22 million. The Public Spaces program also forged a new funding partnership with the MParks Foundation. In addition to the Public Spaces program, we are working with MEDC and other partners to expand crowdfunding opportunities for small businesses and other private sector initiatives. Connect with the range of resources available at [crowdfundingMI.com](http://crowdfundingMI.com).

**CROWDFUNDING MI**  
Invest on Main Street



“As a former city employee for more than 20 years, I’ve long seen the value of the Michigan Municipal League to our communities. Now, working with them as a legislator, I’ve seen first-hand how the League serves its membership in Lansing. I’m extremely impressed with the staff’s professionalism, work ethic, and desire to reach amicable solutions with me and my fellow lawmakers.”

**ROBERT KOSOWSKI**  
(D-WESTLAND)



### MML Handbooks

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

## INQUIRY SERVICE/ RESOURCES

Our Inquiry Service provides customized research assistance and critical information to members on core topics. We serve as an information clearinghouse, helping to steer communities through the complexities of local governance. We are home to a one-of-a-kind, searchable, online city charter database, pay and benefits survey, and electronic labor contract library. We have also built an extensive library of sample ordinances, policies, contracts, handbooks, and Fact Sheets on core municipal topics. This year we created Fact Sheets on these breaking issues: Medical Marijuana Facilities Licensing Act, METRO Act and DAS/Small Cell Antenna, Open Meetings Act—Email Quorum Violations, and Taxicab Licensing. 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.