



# THE STATE OF YOUR LEAGUE

## MESSAGE FROM DAN GILMARTIN

### Welcome to our 2017/18 Annual State of the League Report

This past year has been a significant one! The League continued its work with our many partners, members, and state officials to advocate for fundamental change to Michigan's municipal finance system through our SaveMICity initiative. This coming year, thanks to significant fundraising by the League's Foundation, we'll expand our advocacy efforts even further through coalition building, research, and public education.

Not ones to rest on our laurels, we continue to strengthen our programs and services for member communities. This past year, we launched two new programs designed to enhance the education of, and engagement with, our League members. Placemaking continues to be a strong economic development driver, and the League's Civic Innovation Labs team continues to develop new partnerships towards that end. Our award-winning risk management programs remain dedicated to offering strong cost savings, and the Legal Defense Fund continues to defend the rights of municipalities in the courts. There are more exciting initiatives to cover, which we are excited to present to you in this report.

Engaging with our members is very important to us. We hope that you will share your challenges, express your concerns, and boast about your successes! We remain energized by all the hard work that you do in your communities and look forward to our ongoing dialogue and partnership to bring sustainable economic growth and quality of life to Michigan.



League Executive Director and CEO



## WHO MAKES UP THE LEAGUE?

**521 Cities, Villages, & Townships:** 278 Cities, 240 VILLAGES, 3 Townships, 1 Grant/ Non-Voting Member, 31 Affiliate Organizations, 46 Business Alliance Program Participants

"The League has accomplished so much in the past year, including enhancing our ongoing SaveMICity municipal finance reform effort and starting the new 16/50 initiative that aims to remove barriers for women seeking municipal management as a profession. I am proud to help lead this organization and am looking forward to seeing what the League will be doing next for our Michigan communities."

CATHERINE BOSTICK-TULLIUS, 2017-2018 LEAGUE PRESIDENT, LAPEER CITY COMMISSIONER

## EDUCATING AND ENGAGING OUR MEMBERS

This year, we launched two new initiatives designed to educate and engage League members. The 16/50 Project was created to close the leadership gap and move the needle forward on the number of women serving at the most executive level of local government. Learn more at [16/50project.org](http://16/50project.org)

Under a new agreement between Central Michigan University and the League, League members and employees, their spouses and qualified dependents can receive discounted access to online programs and classes taken at CMU's satellite locations. Get the details at [global.cmich.edu/mml](http://global.cmich.edu/mml).

"As a former mayor, I've seen first-hand how the League fights for our communities. Now, as a state representative I am pleased to be able to work with the League to support Michigan's municipalities. I can tell you from years of experience, the League is excellent at serving its members."

REP. ROB VERHEULEN (R-WALKER) AND FORMER WALKER MAYOR

## ADVOCACY: MUNICIPAL FINANCE REFORM

The League's advocacy efforts have remained focused on municipal finance reform, from protecting existing revenues and tax base to finding ways to restore revenue sharing and providing communities with tools to control costs. The League has implemented programming and developed ideas that will drive economic development, building the kind of places that residents demand, attracting and retaining a talented 21st century work force.

The League is heavily invested in working with the Legislature and Administration on long-term, comprehensive solutions to fix our state's broken municipal finance system by raising awareness of the fiscal problems that communities are facing; engaging in research that validates this concern; and educating the media and public about this critical issue. We are promoting legislative solutions to reduce local government costs, diversify revenue options, and promote structural reforms to help deliver services more cost-effectively and efficiently. We are committed to sustaining this effort over the long-term to achieve meaningful results.

While working to promote investment in local communities, we are also defending against continuous efforts to strip local control, preempt local decision-making, and reduce local taxing authority. Our successful advocacy has produced expanded budget and policy investments in roads and infrastructure, public safety grant enhancements, and critical preservation of revenue sharing funds and personal property tax reimbursements. We served as the key local government player in last fall's pension and OPEB reform debate and worked diligently to protect communities. Whether fighting to improve the confusing new personal property tax system, defending against the preemption of local zoning related to short-term rentals, or ensuring that local needs and expertise are at the core of all infrastructure-related proposals, the League finds itself at the center of key negotiations on major policy initiatives—further recognition of our position as a leading advocate for local government in Lansing.

## saveMICity

It's no secret that Michigan's system for funding our communities is broken. In the last 17 years, the state has diverted upward of \$8.6 billion in revenue sharing away from our municipalities. Out of all 50 states, Michigan is dead last in the way it funds its local communities, and the consequences are evident. Our streets are crumbling, communities are being forced to cut fire and police protection, and there's an ongoing struggle to pay for other crucial local services. For Michigan to thrive, we need to reform this broken system.

Originally launched by the League in 2016, the SaveMICity initiative aims to educate the public, elected officials, business leaders, and the media about the broken system while working with these groups to find a solution. Now, thanks to support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, the League and our partners are advancing the campaign through expansive media coverage, paid media, and extensive educational efforts. With your 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 the state's broken municipal finance system.

Join the effort and learn more about the campaign at [SaveMICity.org](http://SaveMICity.org).



1,492,106 page views

facebook

3,446 League Likes



## DEVELOPING GREAT PLACES

Communities around the state have embraced placemaking approaches to their downtowns and neighborhoods. But without participation from private developers and other investors, the impact of public placemaking efforts is limited. The League's Civic Innovation Labs team has been working to improve communities' engagement of private developers in the "placemaking implementation" process, with financial support from MSHDA and MEDC.

In this effort, we are working with local partners to identify the community's priority sites, understand their potential to support local goals through development, focus on the critical path from site to development, and connect the community to expertise and resources that help them down that path. Learn from our successes (and failures!) at [placemaking.mml.org](http://placemaking.mml.org), where we feature how-to guides, case studies, and other assistance. 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. And in relation to the last topic, the LDF, in support of Lansing, scored perhaps its most important victory last year when the Supreme Court unanimously upheld the city's local authority to enact and enforce its prevailing wage ordinance. 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)

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

**35**

Active years

**75+**

Percent participation among League members

**23**

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

## LEAGUE FOUNDATION

Thanks to our generous donors, the MML Foundation helped ensure more Michigan local elected and appointed leaders have the tools they need to make the best decisions for their communities.

League members can apply for two opportunities:

- **Tim Doyle Scholarship**—allows newly elected officials to attend the Elected Officials Academy Core Weekender program, where they can learn about financial management, leadership skills, legal issues, and planning and zoning.
- **John Barr Leadership Education Scholarship**— offers five yearly one-time scholarships of up to \$1,000 for nonpartisan leadership training.

This past year, we also expanded the George and Judith Goodman Scholarship Fund to provide a yearly scholarship of up to \$1,000 to a Michigan high school or college student pursuing a career in local government through a public policy or public administration undergraduate or graduate degree. The move reflects the Goodmans' longstanding commitment to making sure that underrepresented people—including women and people of color— have the chance to pursue careers in public service.

The MML Foundation also continued to build fruitful partnerships and secure 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** 5,745 League Followers

**flickr**™

18.2 million views  
9,667 average daily views

## RISK MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS

### Liability & Property Pool Workers' Compensation Fund



Pool member contributions  
**\$21 million**

Workers' Compensation Fund  
**\$33 million**

Since 1978, more than \$250 million returned to members in dividends



Pool annual new claims  
**1,000**

Fund annual new claims  
**2,500**



Pool assets  
**\$82 million**

Fund assets  
**\$150 million**



Pool member equity  
**\$50 million**

Fund member equity  
**\$62 million**

*Stable, cost-effective risk management programs*

## MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE 2017/2018 Board of Trustees

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## CROWDFUNDING

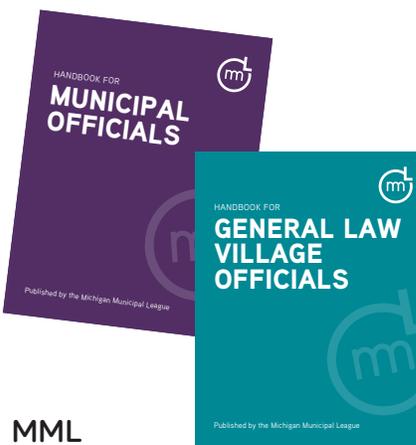
Michigan is a trendsetter when it comes to creative use of crowdfunding, and the rest of the country is starting to take notice. Public Spaces, Community Places, the League-supported civic crowd granting program that is funded by MEDC and uses the Patronicity platform, was recognized in 2017 by the Harvard Kennedy School of Government as a leading Innovation in American government. Two other states have already replicated the program, which has now funded over 160 projects worth more than \$30 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



"There's no doubt in my mind that Michigan communities are a key economic driver for our state's economy. I really appreciate working with the League to help make our communities vibrant places where people love to live, shop, work, dine and enjoy. The League truly does Love Where You Live."

REP. JEREMY MOSS  
(D-SOUTHFIELD) AND FORMER  
SOUTHFIELD COUNCILMEMBER



### 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 clearing-house, helping to steer communities through the complexities of local governance. We are home to a one-of-a-kind, searchable, 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: Embezzlement, Act 51, Campaigning by Public Officials, and Charitable Solicitation in Public Roadways. 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.