

Annual Report



Michael Cerra, Executive Director,
New Jersey State
League of Municipalities

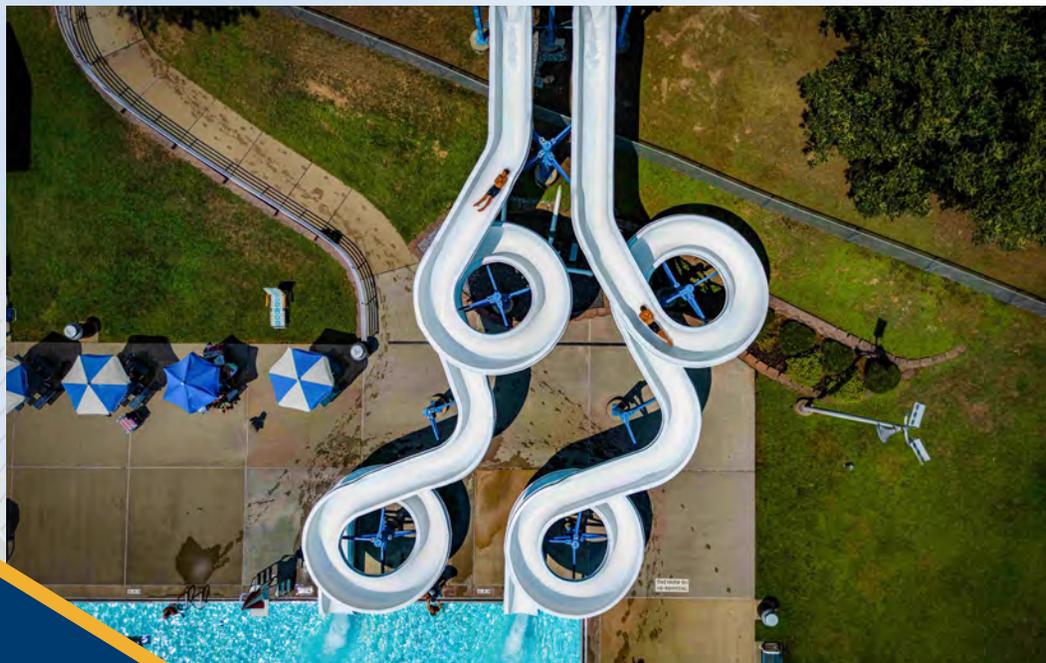
2025

An annual report should reflect on the experiences on the past year, highlighting accomplishments and underlining the work in progress and plans for the future. The 110th Conference presented the shared lessons of municipalities around the state and shone a light into the future.

Here at the League, we are your partner, striving to educate and advocate for local governments as an information resource as well as a dedicated listener to elected and professional representatives as they share their work, successes and challenges alike.

Heading into the unknown, but with a powerful history as a guide, we will continue to work with you through new administrations and opportunities.

The League is committed to retain our role as trusted resource and ally as you navigate the neverending change and challenges in our towns, cities, and state.



Show Off Your City winning photo, Verona



Legislative

The League's Legislative Team, Lori Buckelew, Deputy Executive Director; Paul Penna, Director of Government Affairs; Erin Knoedler, Legislative Analyst; Sadayah Durant-Brown, Legislative Counsel; and Chanelle Kouyate Legislative Administrator, continue to advocate on behalf of municipalities to continue home rule and municipal discretion.

In the second year of the two-year legislative session, NJLM's Legislative Team focused on issues important to local government, serving as an active voice for local officials on topics including, but not limited to:

Affordable Housing Reform: This year, New Jersey municipalities were in the midst of determining their 4th round of affordable housing obligations. The outcome of this new round of numbers will have a major impact on the planning, zoning, environmental, and budgetary decisions of municipalities for years to come. We need a better solution than the builder's remedy.

In March 2024, the Legislature passed and Governor Murphy signed A-4/S-50 (PL 2024, c. 2), which amended the Fair Housing Act (FHA). It established new procedures, standards, and mechanisms for the continued implementation of the Mount Laurel Doctrine, New Jersey's constitutional requirement that all municipalities must provide their fair share of needed affordable housing. The new law governs how the Fourth Round (2025-2035) and future rounds of municipal fair share housing obligations are established and satisfied, through changes in master plans, zoning, and other initiatives in a municipal Housing Element and Fair Share Plan (HEFSP) certified by the state.

The Department of Community Affairs (DCA), as directed by the law, provided non-binding calculations of municipalities' present and prospective need for affordable housing using the formulas.

Over 430 municipalities filed declaratory judgment actions with the Superior Court ahead of the January 31 deadline provided to voluntarily comply with the state-imposed affordable housing requirements. Of those, 159 municipalities filed to modify the housing obligation suggested by the non-binding guidance of the DCA.

On the August 31 deadline for interested parties to challenge the validity of a municipality's Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, over 400 challenges were filed. Some of the challenges were seeking additional information, and since the law did not provide a mechanism to do so, a challenge was filed. At the time of this Annual Report, the other challenges are working through the process, and municipalities will have until December 31, 2025, to settle any challenge or provide an explanation as to why it will not make all or some of the requested changes. Since March 2025, the League has hosted an informational Zoom meeting, weekly since August, open to the 159 municipalities that sought to

modify their obligation or who may have a challenge filed against their Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, with over 220 participants.

The League will continue to closely monitor developments and will act when appropriate and necessary in defense of municipalities.

Health Benefits Reform: Municipalities have three options to provide health benefits to local government employees. Join a Health Insurance Fund (HIF), join the State Health Benefits Program (SHBP) or become self-insured. The SHBP manages the Local Government Employer Group for participating local governments. This economy of scale is supposed to provide affordable health care management for local government employees and employers, despite the lack of local government representatives on either the State Health Benefits Commission or the Plan Design Committee.

Every year, for the past four years, health insurance costs for municipalities, taxpayers, and municipal employees have drastically increased for those participating in the SHBP Local Government Employer Group. In September, the State Health Benefits Commission (SHBC) approved a 36.2% increase for Plan Year 2026. Previous increases include 16.4% in PY25, 7.4% in PY24, and 20% in PY23.

Since the end of 2020, over ninety local governments have left the SHBP, choosing to obtain coverage for their employees from a Health Insurance Fund or the private market.

The approved SHBP recommended 36.2% increase for the Local Employer Government Group does not include fully funding the \$200 million borrowed to date under c. 66 (law that allowed SHBP State Government program to loan funds to SHBP Local Government to meet cash flow), nor bring the Claims Stabilization Reserve up to the required two-month balance.

A few days after the 2026 Plan Year rates were affirmed, Governor Murphy and 17 public sector unions representing State workers announced an agreement designed to achieve approximately \$75 million in recurring health benefit savings for the final six months of Fiscal Year 2026. While this agreement does not include local governments in the SHBP and represents a short-term remedy, it is the League's hope that this agreement influences discussions for the SHBP Local Government Employee Group. It is likely that legislation will be required to apply these savings to the Local Employer Group and avoid bargaining with local units. The Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) which outlines the agreed-upon changes for State workers will be proposed and voted on by the State Health Benefits Plan Design Committee. It will mean the State can begin implementing changes, and realizing savings, as close as possible to the start of the new Plan Year on January 1, 2026. The MOA states that due to the cost savings agreed to by the unions, no escalator will be applied to the members' contributions to the cost benefits for plan year 2026.

Additionally, the FY26 State Budget included language



Show Off Your City: Allamuchy Township



Show Off Your City: Allentown

that required both the State members and Public Employee members of the Plan Design Committee (PDC) to submit proposals to AON to achieve \$100 million in recurring savings during the first six months of the plan year 2026, and any potential savings are not reflected in this rate setting. Due to the agreement between the Governor and state unions, the need for the PDC to find savings will be repealed by the legislature.

In July Senate President Scutari released an op-ed on “How we can save New Jersey’s public employee health plan”. In the op-ed he announced a Senate Committee, comprised of the chairs of the various senate committees that would consider any legislative changes to SHBP. Senators Sarlo, Ruiz, Lagana, Vitale and Beach have begun holding stakeholder meetings.

The League has a Health Benefits Task Force, chaired by Hamilton (Mercer) Mayor and NJLM 2nd Vice President Jeff Martin exploring viable options. The year-over-year rate increases coupled with the drastic exodus of local governments from the SHBP requires legislation to fix this problem.

Public Notices: In response to several newspapers halting print publication, A-5151 (P.L. 2024, c. 106) was signed into law on December 31, 2024, creating a temporary fix and allowing print or online legal publications through March 31, 2025. Consequently, S-4136 (P.L. 2025, c. 22) was signed into law on February 28, 2025, extending the provisions of the P.L. 2024, c. 106 until June 30, 2025.

A long-term solution was needed and, in response, S-4654 (P.L. 2025, c. 72) was signed into law on June 30, 2025, providing for the publication of required legal notices on government internet websites and through certain online news publications. This legislation provides a permanent solution to the requirement of publishing public notices online. The League was an advocate for a long-term solution specifically in allowing local governments to post legal notices on their government websites where it is reasonable to expect the public to obtain information regarding their local government and community.

Starting March 1, 2026, local governments (municipalities, counties, school districts, special districts) must publish their legal notices on their official websites. Local notices are defined as “any resolution, official proclamation, notice or advertisement of any sort, kind, or character, including proposals for bids on public work and otherwise, required by law or by the order or rule of any court to be published by a public entity, corporation, an individual, or any other entity.” The website must be accessible, free of charge, with the items conspicuously placed on the website. Notices must be displayed for at least one week, or other time period as required by law, before transferring the notice to the archive. The notices must be archived for at least one year, and the archive is not subject to the records retention schedule established by the State Records Committee or the Destruction of Public Records law. It is important to note that nothing

in the law precludes a municipality from publishing a notice in a newspaper in addition to publishing the notice on its official website.

In addition, the local unit must provide a hyperlink of its public notice webpage to the Secretary of State, who by March 1, 2026, must have a website with hyperlinks to all public notice pages. Public entities will be responsible for providing the Secretary of State’s office with updates to the hyperlinks as needed.

The local unit must also publish in a newspaper public notice from January 1 to December 31, 2026, twice a month with the link to the municipality’s webpage for official notices. The notice must include complete text that each legal notice of the local unit may be obtained or viewed on the public entity’s official website and provide the hyperlink.

A municipality may also publish legal notices in a print or online newspaper if they choose, but they still must publish them on their municipal website. If a local unit uses an online news publication, it must prominently display a hyperlink on its website to the online news publication. Online newspapers must publish any legal notices they receive within 24 hours of receipt. Cost to publish online notices cannot exceed the rate established in N.J.S.A. 35:2-1.

The law also addresses public notices required by non-public entities. Such notices must be published in an online news publication. The online news publication must be based on the geographic target.

Land Use Legislation

There are several pieces of legislation that have progressed through some part of the legislative process that are deeply concerning to the League, and we have been advocating against.

Stranded Assets. An amended version of S-1408, which authorizes the conversion of certain office parks and retail centers to mixed-use developments was favorably reported from the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee. The amendments to S-1408 do not address the concerns raised by local officials and removes the two-year sunset, making the bill even more objectionable. As amended, the SCS for S-1408 would require a municipal planning board to permit the conversion of eligible properties, so-called “stranded assets” into mixed-use developments, effectively bypassing the existing variance procedure and preempting local zoning; Define an eligible property as an office park that is at least 50,000 square feet or a retail center of at least 15,000 square feet; and has a vacancy rate of at least 25% rate for at least 18 months immediately preceding the application; or has suffered an economic downturn over the immediately preceding 3 years, demonstrated by evidence of a quantifiable loss in revenue such that the developer’s expenses for the premises have exceeded revenues by at least 30% or more each year.

The substitution eliminates the 2-year sunset in the



Show Off Your City: Bernards Township



Show Off Your City: Burlington

original bill, meaning that this would be a permanent preemption of local planning.

A mixed-use development, which may include the demolition of existing structures, that is subject to a preemptive conversion will be considered a permitted use and not require a variance, subject to several criteria including the development otherwise complies with zoning requirements in the municipality's mixed-use zone, the application proposes at least two types of uses, one of which will be residential, and industrial use, and at least 20% of the residential units to be constructed reserved as very-low-income housing, low-income housing, or moderate-income housing

The bill goes on to establish the criteria to follow if there are multiple mixed-use zones and legislates mixed-use zones if the municipality does not have a mixed-use zone. This is likely to result in costly litigation.

In addition, the bill's legislative findings declare that "one significant impediment to converting stranded retail centers and office parks into dynamic mixed-use communities is the application of outdated, rigid municipal zoning regulations that often separate residential and commercial uses from each other." Then states that in order "to encourage the development of vibrant and desirable mixed-use communities, further to the public good, it is appropriate for the Legislature to set standards to modernize local land use regulations that stand in the way of the repurposing and redevelopment of stranded retail centers and office parks."

The League testified in strong opposition to the legislation based on the unnecessary and unwarranted preemption of local master planning. In our statement, we noted that any such application can be made through the variance process or a redevelopment process. Further, we noted that the criterion in the bill is ripe for litigation and expressed concern that this could turn into a backdoor means to challenge a town's approved affordable housing plan and expose the municipality to litigation.

Land Use Element to be Included as Part of Master Plan. S-4451, which modifies requirements for land use plan element and housing plan element of municipal master plan passed the Senate in June. It awaits consideration in the Assembly.

The League raised several concerns with the sponsor, principally because the legislation makes the housing element a mandatory element, and the bill is effective immediately. The implication is that every current master plan could be deemed non-compliant with the statute, forcing the immediate revision of hundreds of master plans.

The new legislation will seemingly require municipalities to completely reassess and revamp their master plans to accommodate the new housing requirements. It will require the expenditure of significant resources to have the appropriate professionals go out into the municipalities to assess the current plans and changes that will need to be made, as well as to create further plans regarding, for example,

transportation and access.

Reduction in the Required Number of Parking Spaces in Statewide site improvement standards at residential developments. S-2974 would restrict a municipality's ability to make land use decisions that best suit its community and that are reflected in their Master Plan. By mandating specific zoning obligations without local input, it would undermine local officials' ability to properly manage land use in their municipality. Without local review, planning and decision-making authority, local officials are unable to be as effective to their respective communities.

S-2974 assumes that reduced parking is appropriate for all projects based on their proximity to public transportation. While this may be true in some instances, it may not be true in others. Decisions on minimum parking for projects are best made on a case-by-case basis and should be made by local officials with an understanding of the specific needs of the community. Under current law, a developer can already obtain relief from minimum parking standards.

Eliminating minimum parking requirements may be suitable for some areas, but in others could cause congestion and parking shortages. Limited parking availability increases "cruising" or the amount of time drivers spend looking for parking.

Under current law, a developer can obtain relief from the standards from a reviewing board on a case-by-case basis, but such relief is subject to the scrutiny of local officials. This relief done at a local level allows for individual projects to be reviewed and relief to be granted when appropriate. This type of review maintains the original legislative intent and function of the site improvement standards.

The SCS for S-2974 was favorably reported from the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee in March.

Warehouse Prohibition Near Historic District. This amended legislation (S-5241) narrowly defines a historic district and grants waiver authority to the Planning Board where the historic district is located. Under this narrow definition of historic district, this legislation applies to about eight locations throughout the state. However, in one instance, the historic district is in a neighboring municipality from the proposed development and grants land use authority to the neighboring municipality where there is no responsibility or accountability to the residents of the developing municipality.

The League opposes this legislation because it violates the long-held tenet of home rule where municipalities make decisions for their communities and stand accountable to their residents. It passed the Senate Community and Urban Affairs Committee and was scheduled for a full Senate vote before being removed from the agenda.

Changes to the Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief and Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid Programs. This legislation, which was introduced at the end of June and has yet to have a hearing in either chamber,



Show Off Your City: Deptford



Show Off Your City: East Brunswick

repeals sections of law providing for the distribution Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief and Consolidated Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid. It replaces the Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief Aid program with a new initiative, the Municipal Property Tax Relief Program. It requires State revenues currently deposited into the Energy Tax Relief Property Tax Relief Fund to be deposited into the Municipal Property Tax Relief Fund and dedicates those revenues to support State aid payments to municipalities under the new program.

If it were to be enacted for State fiscal year 2026, the amount credited to the "Municipal Property Tax Relief Fund" is to be \$1.455 billion multiplied by the sum of 1.0 and the index rate or zero, whichever is greater. For State fiscal year 2027 and for each fiscal year thereafter, the amount credited to the "Municipal Property Tax Relief Fund" would be equal to the amount credited to the fund in the prior fiscal year, multiplied by the sum of 1.0 and the index rate or zero, whichever is greater. Under the bill, no municipality would receive less than the amount received in Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief Aid in calendar year 2024, or State fiscal year 2025 for a municipality that utilizes a State fiscal year budget cycle. State aid provided to municipalities in excess of the \$1.455 billion would be distributed pursuant to a formula developed by the Commissioner of Community Affairs, as specified in the bill.

Similar to the Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief Act, the bill includes a provision providing that if the State does not make the appropriations and distributions required under the bill, the State would forgo the collection of certain corporation business tax revenues from all corporate taxpayers that are not public utilities for that tax year.

Amounts distributed to municipalities from the "Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid Fund" in excess of the amount distributed to the municipality from the "Energy Tax Receipts Property Tax Relief Fund" during the State fiscal year 2002 is to be used for the purpose of reducing the amount the municipality is required to raise by local property tax levy for municipal purposes.

Under the bill, in any year that certain net payments from specified sources to the State exceed \$1.425 billion, 75% of the amount in excess of \$1.425 billion would be required to be credited to the "Municipal Property Tax Relief Aid Fund" and be distributed to municipalities as additional aid.

If passed by both chambers and signed by the Governor, this legislation would take effect during the next State fiscal year.

Business Personal Property Tax: The Business Personal Property Tax (BPPT) was enacted in 1997 as New Jersey's response to laws enacted at the federal level. While telephone exchanges operating 51% or greater within a municipality is required to pay BPPT to the municipality, the definition of how these calculations should be made has been challenged and has resulted in expensive court fees for Hopewell Borough.

Absent legislation to clarify this tax, every municipality

faces the prospect of costly annual tax court filings, similar to Hopewell as seen in the *Verizon v. Hopewell* case. Currently, there is a minimum of 127 other municipalities in the position of Hopewell Borough, and well over 60 pending trials. The New Jersey Supreme Court affirmed an Appellate Division decision and Hopewell was successful, municipalities still settle individually for each tax year.

The League supports S-1535 (Turner/Stack), of which there is currently no Assembly companion.

This bill will restore the local property tax status quo intended to be determined in 1997 by revising the definition of "local exchange telephone company" to mean a telecommunications carrier which held the regional monopoly on landline service before the market was opened to competitive local exchange carriers by the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, or the corporate successors of such a local exchange telephone company.

This will accomplish two important purposes: first, it will require that the dominant telecommunications carrier in each region pays the business personal property tax on its business personal property regardless of the percentage of a local telephone exchange that it serves and will permanently enshrine that business personal property into the tax base of the municipalities in which it is located.

The bill would also require that if a municipality is the prevailing party in a court proceeding between it and a local exchange telephone company concerning the taxation of business personal property pursuant to R.S.54:4-1 following a court decision, settlement, or other resolution of that proceeding, the municipality, and any related amicus entities, shall be awarded attorney's fees as costs to the local exchange telephone company.

The League is strongly advocating for passage of this legislation to provide certainty to municipalities and avoid costly legal expenses.

Title 59 Immunity: New Jersey local governments are either self-insured or belong to a Joint Insurance Fund (JIF), which is a self-funded insurance pools with the coverage being funded by tax dollars. Recently, one municipality was found liable for a jury award of \$21.5 million after it was determined that the municipal stormwater system was unsafe and that the municipality failed to address its stormwater runoff issues, causing four homes to be destroyed. This, despite the municipality spending over \$1.2 million on stormwater improvements for the specific area designated in the lawsuit. This is the largest claim ever against a New Jersey municipality.

The League, in conjunction with the Municipal Excess Liability-Joint Insurance Fund (MEL-JIF), call for a new provision be added to New Jersey Tort Claims Act (Title 59) providing that neither a public entity nor its public employees shall be liable under any claim or legal theory, including but not limited to any claim for trespass, nuisance, negligence, strict liability, inverse condemnation or a dangerous property condition under N.J.S.A. 59:4-2 for flooding or any flood



Show Off Your City: Elizabeth



Show Off Your City: Mt. Olive

related or storm damages actually or allegedly caused, in whole or in part, from a public entity's failure to provide a stormwater drainage or management system or, if a stormwater drainage or management system is provided, for lack of sufficient capacity; defective design; any malfunction or defect or deficiency associated with the stormwater drainage or management system; failure to perform or inadequate inspections, maintenance, repair(s), alteration(s) or otherwise upgrade an existing stormwater system; and for any other alleged or actual insufficiency or failure in the system.

In addition, we call for N.J.S.A. 20:3-29 to be amended to provide that no damages shall be recoverable or awarded for non-economic losses, including but not limited to, pain and suffering, emotional distress, quality of life or inconvenience for condemnation, inverse condemnation, or taking claims related to flooding, storm, or stormwater.

Workers Compensation: The League worked very closely with the Municipal Excess Liability Joint Insurance Fund (MEL-JIF) to limit the impact of S-2373 and worked with the sponsors on reasonable revisions to the legislation.

S-2373, as introduced, would have made public employers and the workers' compensation system susceptible to lawsuits by both current and former employees that include not only remedies available in common law tort actions, but also civil fines and attorney fees for the plaintiff. This would subsequently drive up the cost for workers' compensation insurance, in which New Jersey is already paying the highest workers' compensation rates in the nation.

The amendments made to the legislation in June addressed our concerns by clearly defining "mental health professional" and requiring an order of a workers' compensation judge.

The legislation was received by the Assembly and referred to the Assembly Appropriations Committee.

Federal

SALT Deduction Cap Increased: The One Big Beautiful Bill, signed into law by President Donald Trump on July 4, temporarily changes the maximum State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction for taxpayers earning less than \$500,000.

The law raises the SALT deduction cap from \$10,000 to \$40,000, effective beginning in 2025. (The cap is \$20,000 per person for married couples who file separately.) In 2026, the cap rises 1% each year through 2029. Unless extended prior to 2029, the SALT deduction cap reverts to \$10,000 in 2030.

This has long been a League federal priority, and we thank the members of the House delegation that advocated to ensure its inclusion in this legislation. While we would have preferred a permanent extension of the deduction that does not require itemization, we will continue to advocate for New Jersey taxpayers.

Maintain Tax Exemption for Municipal Bonds: During the negotiations for the One Big Beautiful Bill, there was consideration of ending the tax exemption for municipal bonds.

Municipal bonds are used to finance projects including roads, buildings, water systems, and sewer systems, among other infrastructures.

Proposals to eliminate or reduce the tax exemption for municipal bonds would significantly increase borrowing costs for local governments, forcing difficult budget decisions and limiting our ability to invest in vital public projects.

The elimination of the tax exemption would correspondingly raise borrowing costs by \$823.92 billion, a cost that would be passed onto American residents and amount to a \$6,554.67 tax increase for every American household over the next decade.

These changes would shift financial burdens onto local taxpayers and risk delaying or canceling much-needed infrastructure improvements.

The League, along with the National League of Cities (NLC), successfully advocated to ensure that the tax exemption on municipal bonds remained in place by outreach to the New Jersey Congressional Delegation and created a sample resolution for municipalities to adopt and share with their congressional representatives.

ARPA SLFRF Winddown: The American Rescue Plan Act State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds that provided federal funds to all municipalities in 2022 must have been obligated by the end of 2024 and be spent by the end of 2026. The League reminded municipalities multiple times over the course of the year and worked with individual municipalities to ensure reporting compliance. Further, we have shared information about the process to begin closing down the process. As a reminder, the reporting process remains in place even if all of the funds have been obligated and spent.

National Flood Insurance Program Lapse and Reauthorization (NFIP): Since passage in 2012, there has not been a long-term reauthorization of the NFIP. With the expiration in 2017, there have been more than 30 short term reauthorizations, including in 2024. During the 2025 government shutdown, the NFIP lapsed, making coverage very difficult. The NFIP Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2025, sponsored by New Jersey Representative Frank Pallone, addresses various aspects of the flood insurance program. By tackling issues such as rate hikes, affordability, solvency, mitigation, mapping accuracy, oversight, and claims process reforms, the NFIP Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2025 aims to create a more stable and effective flood insurance program that can better serve communities at risk of flooding. The NFIP Reauthorization and Reform Act of 2025 is consistent with the League's 2022 Conference Resolution 2022-06 Advocating for Long-Term NFIP Reauthorization. Over the course of the year, we have shared information requests from New Jersey United States Senator Booker about reauthorization and alerted membership to the program lapse.

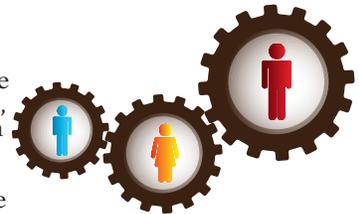
Labor Relations

The League's Labor Relations Advisory Service is conducted by the League's Labor Relations Counsels, Angelo Genova and Joseph Hannon of the firm Genova Burns LLC.

And now the League has bolstered its Labor Relations offerings by the retention of former municipal

manager and former Director of the Division of Local Government Services Matthew U. Watkins. Joseph Hannon is available to respond to a broad range of public employer labor and employment law questions as a telephone or email service of the League. As part of the Labor Relations Advisory Service, Genova Burns provides expert attorney presentations at several League seminars throughout the year and during the Annual Conference. He also authors the Labor Relations column in *NJ Municipalities* magazine.

Matt Watkins is available to provide assistance and insight into negotiation skills and strategies and trends. He provides Labor Negotiations columns to *NJ Municipalities* magazine



Show Off Your City: Saddle River

and can provide guidance on these trends and negotiating with your local bargaining units. He has been conducting Management Workshops in 2025.

Shared Service Libraries, a valuable service providing a sampling of enacted ordinances and shared services agreements from across the state on over 70 topics. The searchable libraries may be accessed on the League's website.

The Bureau features resource pages for over 20 topics on the League website. Pages include critical subject information such as legislation pertaining to hot topics and their history, as well as updates via the News Flashes and links to pertinent resources and recent news articles. The Finance Center, Social Media Resource Center, and Bureau Reference Desk are just a part of the collection of information on matters of importance to municipalities. Publications and digital content overseen by Taran Samhammer, the League's Director of Marketing Communications and Technology. New research, an areas of growth for the League, is developed by Research Associate Ciara Bradley.

The League also offers a diverse listing of publications, most of which are digital and include valuable data in Microsoft Excel spreadsheets.

NJ Municipalities Magazine

NJ Municipalities focuses on local governments around the state through articles, departments, columns, and news items that continue a 100+ year tradition of League communications. A trusted resource, the magazine strives to inform and inspire more than 6,300 readers and estimated 19,000 pass-along readers.

This year, Editor Amy Spiezio and Advertising and Subscriptions Manager Tasneem Kapadia worked with a wide array of contributors to create monthly print and digital issues October through June. Pulling from all segments of municipal government, the magazine ran more than 200 articles. In addition, this year a new magazine blog, www.njlm.org/NJMblog, was launched to provide additional coverage of local news and events. Members are invited to send in their news for inclusion in the weekly update.

NJ Municipalities proudly published Verona's win of the Show Off Your City 2025, the inspiring activities of Local Government Week, the encouraging entries of the Louis Bay II Future Municipal Leadership Scholarships, and the impressive staying power of those named to the League's Halls of Fame. The magazine continually seeks focused responses from those creating the policies that impact League members. 222 West State Street, Local Knowledge Quiz, Gold Dome, Tech Update, Labor Relations, Legal Q&A, Local Governing, and Labor Negotiations provide specific information written by thought leaders for the improvement of day-to-day municipal functions on topics including cyber security, property taxes, pedestrian malls, drug testing, campaign finance, and leave policies.

One of the magazine's core functions is to help local leaders prepare for the future. Throughout this year,

NJ Municipalities has run stories in special focus sections on different aspects of the timely local issues like public health, technology, infrastructure, leadership, and the environment.

We will continue to advocate for local government officials by seeking and publishing information that will help them to thrive. We will also continue to invite local government officials to share their stories with their peers in local government and encourage them to subscribe to the magazine for themselves and their teams.

Training & In-Service Programs

Approved continuing education programs serve as a cost-effective way for municipal professionals to maintain their respective state



licenses. The League works cohesively with numerous accreditation bodies representing 20 government licenses, including Continuing Legal Education for New Jersey and Pennsylvania Attorneys, Municipal Licensees, Tax Assessors, Recycling Coordinators, Planning and Zoning Board Secretaries, Zoning Officials, Land Use Administrators, and Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.

In addition to the Annual Conference, the League's offerings for of professional development seminars and webinars, educating more than 2,000 attendees in 2024/2025 is overseen by Danielle Holland, Senior Manager for Continuing Education. Highlights included:

- Orientation for Newly Elected, Reelected, and Experienced Officials
- Budgeting for the Elected Official: Everything you Need to Know to Create, Balance, and Approve Your Municipalities' Budget
- Labor Negotiations 2025
- One-Day Mini-Conference
- Management Workshop Series
- Electronic Records
- Ethics Update
- OPRA for Municipal Officials
- Polide Disciplinary Issues
- Accumated Sick Leave Payouts
- Budget, Ethics, and Procurement Updates

NJLM Annual Conference

The NJLM Annual Conference is the largest municipal conference in the country and a critical mainstay in the portfolio of services provided by the League. The Annual New Jersey State League of Municipalities Conference is a must-attend event that draws leaders from all around the Garden State.



This year, the exhibit hall was sold out in August expanding by several aisle to host commercial firms, government agencies, nonprofits, and associations displaying the latest products and services to educate and assist NJ municipalities with solutions. Over 740 vendors occupied over 1,100 booths. Additionally, more than 125 educational sessions, clinics, panels, and workshops were conducted by the League and the 20 affiliate associations to provide invaluable learning and networking opportunities.

Whether honing skills in educational sessions, networking with peers at League events, or meeting with the innovators of goods and services in the Exhibit Hall, the Conference is an environment for local officials and professionals to share knowledge, experiences.

We look forward to seeing you in Atlantic City for the 111th Annual Conference, November 18-20, 2026.



Show Off Your City: Vineland

NJLMEF

The League would like to thank the Trustees and Officers of the Educational Foundation for their ongoing commitment to provide a non-partisan informational resource for local government that offers timely research and a proactive approach to resolving the complex issues affecting New Jersey's diverse communities.

Timothy C. McDonough, *President; Mayor, Hope Township (Warren); Past President, NJLM*

Michael F. Cerra, *Treasurer; Executive Director, NJLM*

Lori Buckelew, *Secretary; Deputy Executive Director, NJLM*

John J. Anderson, *Trustee; Vice President, External Affairs, Jersey Central Power & Light Company*

Ken Gardner, *Trustee; Former Councilman, Woodbridge*

Jeanne Herb, *Trustee; Executive Director, Environmental Analysis & Communications Group, EJ Bloustein School of Planning & Public Policy, Rutgers, the State University of NJ*

Paul Matacera, *Trustee; Partner Emeritus, MBI GluckShaw; Former Mayor, North Brunswick; Past President, NJLM*

Brian Turano, *Trustee; Senior Vice President, Government Banking, Citizens Bank*

Suzanne Walters, *Trustee; Former Mayor, Stone Harbor; Past President, NJLM*

Louise Wilson, *Trustee; Former Mayor, Montgomery; Past President, NJLM Education Foundation*

Triska W. Cecil, Esq., *Legal Advisor; General Counsel, NJLM; Mason, Griffin & Pierson, P.C.*

222 West State Street Urban Renewal Corp.

The Corporation owns and operates the League's headquarters building.

President: Paul Matacera, *Former Mayor North Brunswick; Past President, NJLM*

Vice President: Peter Cantu, *Mayor, Plainsboro; Past President, NJLM*

Secretary: Michael Cerra, *Executive Director, NJLM*

Treasurer: Lori Buckelew, *Deputy Executive Director, NJLM*

General Counsel: Trishka W. Cecil, Esq., *General Counsel, NJLM*

Trustees:
Gene Feyl, *Former Mayor Denville Former Member, NJLM Executive Board*

Albert Kelly, *Mayor, Bridgeton; Past President, NJLM*

Colleen Mahr, *Mayor, Fanwood; Past President, NJLM*

Suzanne Walters, *Former Mayor Stone Harbor; Past President, NJLM*

Membership & Finance

The League is completing its 110th year of service to the municipalities of New Jersey. Our membership currently includes all 564 municipalities in the State of New Jersey. The League's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30.

The budget under which the League currently operates is set forth on this page.



NJLM

2025-2026 Adopted Budget

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| INCOME | |
| Appropriation of Prior Cash Bal | 0 |
| Magazine Income | 270,000 |
| Base Rent - Sublease | 77,634 |
| Expense Rent - Sublease | 69,775 |
| Parking | 13,950 |
| Membership Dues | 760,355 |
| NJLM Conference Income | 3,100,674 |
| Publications | 25,000 |
| Seminar Income | 200,000 |
| Internet Advertising | 225,000 |
| Corporate Supporters | 60,000 |
| Miscellaneous Receipts | 3,500 |
| Employee Medical Contributions | 85,000 |
| Interest | 193,730 |
| Total | 5,084,618 |
| EXPENSE | |
| Magazine Expense | 185,000 |
| Base Rent - NJLM Office Lease | 379,265 |
| Expense Rent - NJLM Office Lease | 206,787 |
| NJLM Conference Expense | 905,000 |
| Seminar Expense | 75,000 |
| Salaries | 1,650,000 |
| Social Security & Medicare | 123,216 |
| Pension Employer Portion | 265,700 |
| Disability Insurance | 1,600 |
| Workers Compensation Ins | 4,950 |
| Medical Benefits | 789,900 |
| League/Staff Memberships | 3,500 |
| Unemployment Compensation Insuran | 5,600 |
| Legislative | 65,000 |
| Tuition Reimbursement | 1,200 |
| Audit | 12,500 |
| Office Supplies | 30,000 |
| Legal | 60,000 |
| Postage | 30,000 |
| Equipment Payments | 17,000 |
| Maintenance on Equipment | 4,000 |
| Printing | 8,000 |
| Insurance & Bond Premium | 55,000 |
| Telephone | 20,000 |
| Technology | 90,000 |
| Internet Web Maintenance | 5,000 |
| Scholarships | 3,000 |
| Books & Subscriptions | 3,500 |
| National League of Cities | 40,000 |
| Board & Office Meetings | 15,000 |
| Executive Meetings/Travel | 15,000 |
| Staff Meetings/Travel | 12,500 |
| Online Ordinance Shared Services | 2,400 |
| Temporary Help | 0 |
| Total | 5,084,618 |