

League Link

A Newsletter of [The Pennsylvania Municipal League](#)



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March 2021



Advocacy Action

Direct Funding for Local Governments Secured with President's Signature

At the start of his term, President Joe Biden proposed a \$1.9 trillion COVID-19 relief package, The American Rescue Plan. The President hoped to gain bipartisan support for his proposal, however, Congressional Democrats decided to move forward with the President's COVID package in early February by introducing a budget resolution through the reconciliation process as bipartisan talks did not yield a breakthrough.

The House took swift action on the budget resolution, H.R. 1319, first taking up the bill in the House Committee on Oversight and Reform on February 12 and finally passing the bill by the full House on February 27. H.R. 1319 included \$350 billion for state, local and tribal governments, which the Senate preserved after passing the bill on March 6 in a 50-49 vote with one non-voting Senator. While the Senate maintained the \$350 billion in funding for state, local and tribal governments, there were other changes to the bill. These changes included removing the minimum wage increase, narrowing eligibility for stimulus checks and reducing weekly unemployment payments. Due to these changes, the bill had to go back to the House for final vote before going to the President's desk.

President Biden signed The American Rescue Plan into law on March 11, ensuring direct funding for local governments.

Under the law, local governments are directly allocated \$65.1 billion out of the total \$350 designated for states, local and tribal governments. Of this direct funding, about \$45.7 billion will go to CDBG entitlement communities and about \$19.3 billion will go to non-entitlement communities. For non-entitlement municipalities with a population less than 50,000, allocation will be capped at 75 percent of the municipality's most recent pre-pandemic budget. Additionally, the Senate added language providing for two

disbursements of the funds and requiring funds to be spent by 2024. We will learn more about eligible spending in the coming days, but it may be used to replace lost revenue.

Over the last year, The League has worked in partnership with the National League of Cities (NLC) and our members to advocate for flexible and direct federal funding for local governments. The League, along with NLC, worked diligently to advocate to Congress on our members' behalf through letters, press releases and meetings, in addition to engaging members in our advocacy efforts through press conferences and take action alerts. We will continue to work with NLC and our Congressional delegation to provide information to all of you as it becomes available.

Thanks to our collective efforts, Pennsylvania will receive roughly \$13 billion dollars, close to \$8 billion of which will go directly to our local governments to help recover from the pandemic.

The League's Spring District Meeting and Resolutions Process

Our municipalities continue to fight for and serve their communities while facing the unique challenges resulting from the events of 2020 and its impact for years to come. As a member driven organization, it is important we hear from you to accurately represent your municipality's needs with the General Assembly, especially in these unprecedented times.

Each spring, League members receive the opportunity to submit policy suggestions through resolutions, shaping The League's policy agenda. Simply propose a policy resolution, which would then go to the annual Municipal Leadership Summit for consideration by the Resolutions Committee and full League membership. This is a very important process because it sets the future policy priorities and positions of The League.

View The League's [2020 adopted resolutions](#) as a sample to prepare for this year's Spring District Meeting on April 6. Please contact Amy Sturges, Director of Governmental Affairs, at asturges@pml.org if you have any questions.

Executive Director's Report



Check out the section on our website dedicated to member [Community Response During Coronavirus](#).

←→ | **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Social distancing means **staying away** from **close contact** in public spaces.



League's Latest

[Energy Codes and Sustainability – Free Municipal Energy Code Enforcement Assessments and Training](#)

Save the Date! The [League's District Meeting](#) will be held on April 6 via zoom. The exact meeting time is TBD. [Click to Register Now!](#)

The 2021 APMM Web Conference will be held on May 24 – 25. [Click to View Session Descriptions](#).

New Unemployment Computer System at PA Labor and Industry – Did you know that Labor and Industry (L&I) is putting the finishing touches on a new computer platform called the Unemployment Compensation Benefits Modernization (UC Ben Mod) project? The new system promises to streamline claim filing and processing as well as provide a smooth appeals process for claimants. The most impressive aspect of the new system will be the claimant's ability to view their claims information in real-time. The user guides for the new system are at the [L&I website](#). Members of the U-COMP program will receive information on the new L&I computer platform and much more. For a free, non-binding quote, contact Deb Gross at dgross@pml.org.

Message from PennPRIME Insurance Trusts – It's time to *Swing into Spring* by performing a playground audit. This will allow your Public Works crew ample time to order surfacing material and worn or broken components so that the necessary corrections can be completed before prime sliding time begins. The [Public Playground Safety Handbook](#) provides standards and checklists to assist you in protecting your community's children from injuries while they play. For additional resources, explore [PlayCore's website](#) for reference materials on best practices, design & planning guides, principles of inclusive play, and free webinars.

For more information, see our [News & Announcements and newsfeed](#) on our homepage as well as our League COVID-19 Weekly Update email blasts every Friday.

Also be sure to check out our [COVID-19 Resources for Local Leaders](#) webpage.



COVID-19
RESOURCES FOR
LOCAL LEADERS

Resource Roundup

[American Rescue Plan Implementation Update – NLC](#) – As local leaders begin to put the urgently

needed direct aid from the American Rescue Plan Act into action for our front-line workers, emergency responders, residents, households and small businesses, the National League of Cities (NLC) will be here to answer questions and support your responsible stewardship with tools and guidance.

[Senator Casey – American Rescue Plan: Real Help for Hard Times](#) – This historic legislation will put more money into the pockets of working families, help our children return to school safely, ensure everyone who wants to be can be vaccinated, and finally put this vicious virus behind us. Learn more about what the bill will specifically provide.

[PA State; Local Governments to Receive \\$13.7 Billion in Relief – PEL](#) – Learn how funds can be used and what your community is projected to receive.

[Learn Everything You Need to Know About COVID Relief – NLC](#) – On March 11, nearly a year to the day that our nation shut down to stave off the fast-moving coronavirus pandemic, we marked another historic moment in the U.S. fight against COVID-19.

[U.S. Department of Transportation Announces FY 2021 Round of the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America \(INFRA\) Grant Program – Deadline is March 19](#) – USDOT is seeking applicants for the FY 2021 round of the INFRA discretionary grant program to fund transportation projects of national and regional significance.

[Get to Know Pennie – Pennie was created by Act 42 of 2019, passed unanimously by both legislative chambers and signed into law by Governor Wolf on July 2, 2019](#) – Uninsured Pennsylvanians or those affected by COVID-19 can visit pennie.com and enroll in a plan through May 15.

[The State Transportation Commission and the PA Department of Transportation 2023, 12 year Program Public Comment Period](#) – The Public Comment Period for the 2023 12-Year Program Update begins Monday, March 1, and continues through Wednesday, April 14, 2021. It includes a Transportation Survey and Online Public Forum with Pennsylvania's Secretary of Transportation as the keynote speaker.

Remember, you can access all archived editions of The League Link as well as other member publications, forms and resources in your [Member Dashboard](#).

Pennsylvania Municipal League

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PML.org

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