



Municipal Reporter



PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

"We need to look at public health and safety through a fresh lens."



Values

Local Governance

We believe that local authority and autonomy are central to effective municipal government and we are fully committed to their protection, preservation and advancement.

Non-Partisan

We welcome and respect the perspectives of all elected and appointed officials without regard to their political affiliation.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

We value the diversity of our members and the people they serve, and are dedicated to ensuring equal respect, recognition, fairness, and access to opportunity for everyone.

Leadership

We understand that highly-competent current and future local leaders are vital and we proactively support their ongoing development.

Service

We listen to our members and ensure that their priorities, needs and satisfaction drive what we do.

Collaboration

We work to enhance all municipalities through alliances with public entities, organizations, businesses and educational institutions.

Innovation

We embrace the need to find and develop new ideas and solutions to help local governments increase their adaptability, effectiveness and impact.

Fiscal Integrity

We believe that accountability, transparency and the responsible management of resources are essential for both our association and local government.





Municipal Reporter



Pennsylvania Municipal League

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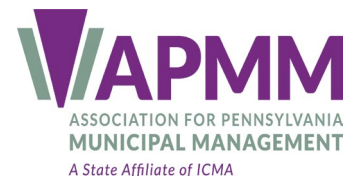
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The Pennsylvania Municipal League
414 North Second Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101



PML.org

Our Mission

To strengthen, empower and advocate for effective local government.

The League is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1900 as an advocate for Pennsylvania's 3rd class cities. Today, The League represents participating Pennsylvania cities, boroughs, townships and home rule communities that all share The League's municipal policy interests. Our Board of Directors oversees the administration of a wide array of municipal services including legislative advocacy (on both the state and federal levels), publications designed to educate and inform, education and training certification programs, membership research and inquiries, programs, and group insurance trusts.

We are continually monitoring the needs of our members and are committed to providing the Commonwealth's municipalities with cost-effective programs and services required to meet the distinct needs of their communities.

The *Municipal Reporter* is a publication of the Pennsylvania Municipal League, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners and the Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management. It is published six times a year on a bimonthly basis. Opinions expressed by authors

and advertisers are not necessarily those of the officers, members and staff of The League.

Original articles on subjects of interest to municipal officials are welcome, but subject to review by editorial staff. The publisher has the right to reject unsuitable advertising.

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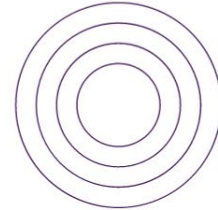


Pennsylvania Municipal
League

REGISTER NOW



NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS TRAININGS



The Pennsylvania Municipal League will be hosting a three-part virtual webinar program, with a recap in June, for newly elected officials and those looking for a refresher. Topics for this program will range from Practical Ethics and Human Resources, Social Media, Labor and Employment Laws, Legislation, how to run a meeting, and the ABC's for Newly Elected Officials.

We will also be piloting our Newly Elected Officials Mentorship Program, which will pair new officials up with senior officials.

- 1 Friday, January 5th from 9am - 12pm**
- 2 Friday, January 12th from 9am - 12pm**
- 3 Friday, January 26th from 9am - 12pm**
- 4 Friday, June 7th from 10am - 12pm**

The cost of this program is \$275; League, PELRAS, APMM, and PSATC members will get a 20% discount by using this code: **PMLMember24**



Mark Your Calendar



Newly Elected Officials Virtual Series #1, Orientation Program
January 5

Newly Elected Officials Virtual Series #2, Orientation Program
January 12

Newly Elected Officials Virtual Series #3, Orientation Program
January 26

APMM Executive Development Conference
February 8 - 9
Omni Bedford Springs Resort

PennPRIME Board of Trustees Virtual Meeting
February 23

U-COMP Board of Trustees Virtual Meeting
March 1

NLC Congressional City Conference
March 9 - 13
Washington, D.C.

42nd Annual PELRAS Conference
March 13 - 15
Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, State College

League Board of Directors Meeting
March 28
King's Mansion, Harrisburg



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PATH courses](#)



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PCCA courses](#)

The League President's Message



DOUGLAS BAKER
MAYOR
CITY OF FRANKLIN



Pennsylvania Municipal
League

During the development of The League's ENVISION 2032 initiative, our membership made it clear that Public Health and Safety are top concerns for local governments both now and potentially for many years to come.

My background in community service spans about four decades and includes time as a paid Emergency Medical Technician at the local ambulance service, and a Police Officer at the ranks of Patrol Officer, Detective and Lieutenant. I also worked several years as a Public Safety Officer which included my Police Duties, Firefighting and Quick Response Medical Service.

I held a City Council seat for several years before being elected Mayor/Council President where I am currently serving my fourth term. I also serve as the Emergency Management Coordinator for the City of Franklin and work as the Law Enforcement Coordinator in the Venango County District Attorney's Office.

Community caretaking is how I came to view my work as a municipal government employee, and it is how I continue to see my work as Mayor. The tools aren't exactly the same, but the mission of promoting the health, safety and general welfare of our citizens remains.

As local government officials, we are all well aware that municipalities are complex places with limited resources and many competing interests. This makes it vitally important that we prioritize the things that contribute to the makings of healthy communities.

Healthy communities are described as places where people feel safe, in a clean environment with access to safe affordable housing, healthy foods, quality education, quality healthcare, adequate employment, safe transportation options, connections to nature, and where people are socially and civically engaged.

Layered on top of all those things comes our responsibilities related to Police, Fire and Emergency Medical Services. As you know, these have become increasingly challenging over the years as we experience rising costs and difficulty in recruiting people to fill these roles.

After September 11, 2001, there was a concerted effort by the federal and state governments to coordinate emergency response services. The general idea was that as the size of an incident grew, resources would be pulled in from neighboring communities, counties, states and the federal government as needed.

Unfortunately, in many parts of Pennsylvania there are already communities that lack the resources to respond consistently to relatively routine calls for emergency services. My fear as a local Emergency Management Coordinator is that when the call goes out to our neighbors for help, there won't be anyone there to respond and that we are one mass casualty incident away from catastrophe.

This issue of the *Municipal Reporter* will explore some ideas as we chart our path into the future of Public Health and Safety.

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Douglas A. Baker".

Douglas A. Baker
Mayor, City of Franklin

The League Executive Director's Message

It was June 2006. He was making a legal turn at U.S. Route 30 and Roosevelt Avenue. He was a loving husband and father. He was the president and CEO of a financial services firm. He volunteered with numerous community service organizations.

He was killed instantly when a speeding tractor trailer collided with deadly force. He was only 50 years old.

The tragic loss of a York business and community leader was my first experience in learning about local use of radar. Following the horrific accident, our police chief considered options to help prevent another injury or death. He investigated deploying more officers to help curtail speed on main corridors and municipal streets. He could use radar speed timing enforcement, however, only by calling in the state police. That's right, local police, which are charged with enforcing the state motor vehicle code cannot use radar enforcement. Pennsylvania is the only state in the nation that doesn't trust local police officers with this technology. The time has long passed since this change should have been enacted by our state legislators and signed into law by a governor. Legislation to authorize such use was passed by the State Senate on three different occasions in the past few years, only to die from inaction by the House of Representatives.

More motorists are distracted today than ever before. High rates of speed are now the norm on our roads and highways. Police departments are understaffed while recruitment efforts are rejuvenated in every corner of our commonwealth. New technology abounds. Work zones and Roosevelt Boulevard in Philadelphia utilize speed cameras/radar enforcement. New cameras, license plate readers, even anti high speed chase devices are on the market. Law enforcement and local government associations alike support local radar. Let's get this legislation out of neutral and passed by the state Senate and state House and get it on the desk of Governor Shapiro for his signature. It's not about revenue for local government, as anyone who ever received a traffic ticket already knows, few dollars actually go to local government. It's about trusting our local police to help improve the quality of life for our residents and visitors.

Public health and safety is the number one priority of local government leaders. Let's give local police the tools to get the job done.

Sincerely,



John S. Brenner



[JOHN BRENNER](#)



Executive Director's Video Report



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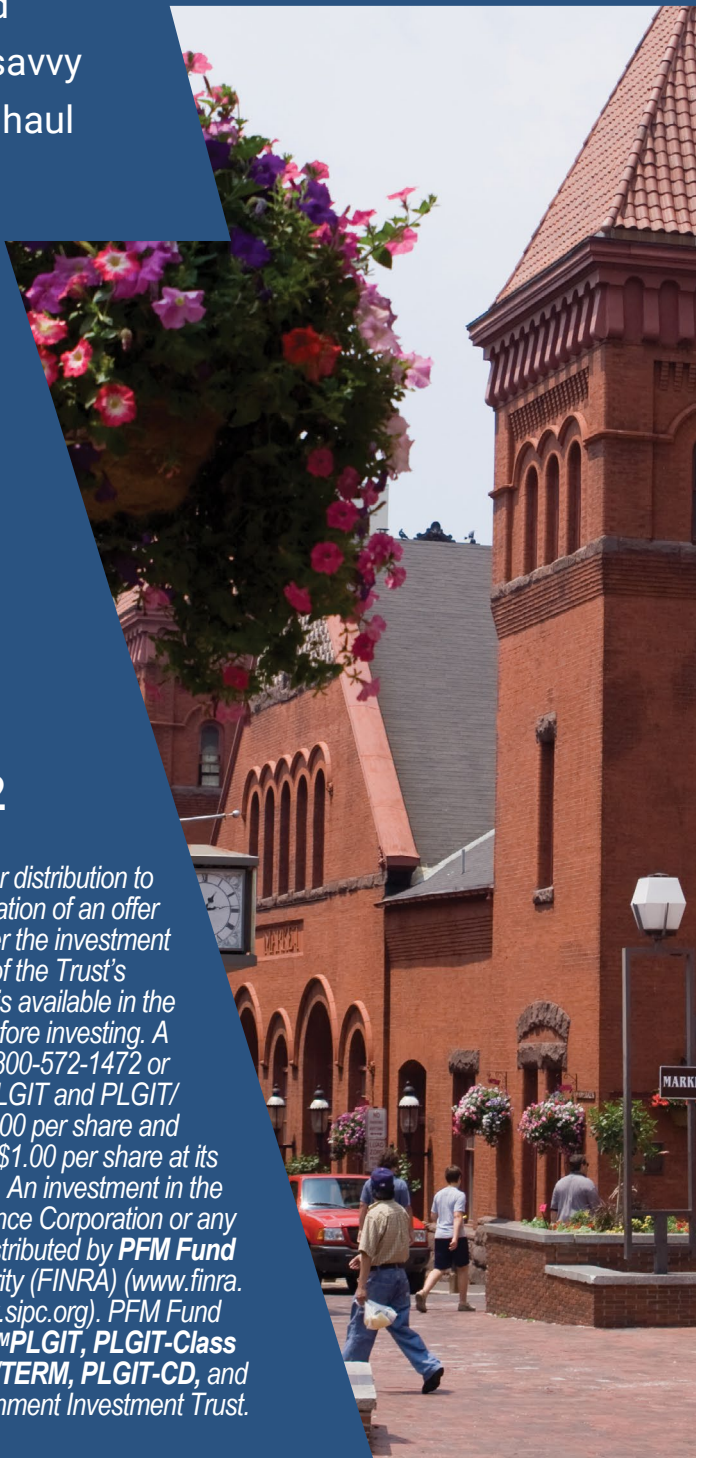
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Inside The League



ABE AMORÓS
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -
OPERATIONS

With an eye toward the New Year, The League looks back fondly to 2023. We not only increased overall membership thanks to the efforts of the Marketing and Member Services team but also new members to PennPRIME due to the relentless efforts by our staff in the Trusts.

The League, sadly, says a tearful “adios” and a hearty “thank you” to Paul Cornell, Director of Trusts Emeritus. With a life-long commitment to public service and local government, Paul has embodied The League’s mission to serve and provide much-needed services to our members while also providing training opportunities for municipalities that eventually help them save money. Paul will leave the Trusts in the capable hands of our new Director of Trusts, Mariella Queipo-Colón as she will oversee PennPRIME, U•COMP and our PennPRIME Workers’ Compensation programs. We cannot thank Paul enough for his dedication, professionalism and camaraderie. (We’ll also miss his encyclopedic knowledge of Dad jokes in the office.) We also want to thank Dona Yedlock who retired in December as our Insurance Services Representative. Dona’s cheerful approach to her duties and knowledge of the renewals allowed for a seamless transition with her replacement, Liz Junkin (even though Dona can’t really be replaced). We wish them both well in retirement and hope that they continue enjoying the many hobbies and interests they have cultivated.

Beginning in January, The League will also welcome Chris Lucco as our new Director of Marketing and Member Services. Chris also brings a wealth of local government experience to the position having been the City Administrator for the City of Bradford where he also served as Police Chief and Patrolman. Chris brings with him an existing knowledge of The League’s programs and services and will, undoubtedly, be successful. Please be sure to welcome him!

Communications continues disseminating quality publications along with pertinent information for our members, including Redevelopment Assistance Capital Project (RACP) notices that would benefit our members. We also hope to highlight more of your success stories in 2024. As a reminder, should your municipality wish to brag about a program or initiative that is currently being worked on and you wish to share it, please contact Debbie Bitting, our Director of Communications at dbitting@pml.org. She will be more than happy to assist you with a submission.

Lastly, with high-profiled elections coming up in 2024 for President, U.S. Senate, Congress and others, let us appeal to our better angels and discuss heated topics with civility. Later in 2024, The League will have a Civility section laid out with tools on how to engage respectfully in civil discourse. As our keynote speaker, Tim Shriver, pointed out during our recent Municipal Leadership Summit in Bethlehem, “We have more in common than we care to admit. Let’s talk, seek to understand each other’s viewpoints and agree that we have more in common than not.”

Happy New Year, everyone!

From Inside The League,

Abe Amorós

Abe Amorós

Q&A with League Leader

Doug Tusing
Council President

Ebensburg Borough

Legislative Committee Co-Chair



This Q&A feature section of the Municipal Reporter highlights an individual local leader who has been involved and engaged with their community and The League.



Pennsylvania Municipal
League

Q: Doug, thank you for your service as Council President of Ebensburg Borough. How did you get involved in local government?

I've always had a general interest in public affairs, but after graduating from college, I spent the next 20 years in a corporate environment that involved frequent relocation, long hours and at times, heavy travel. During the last 9 years of that time, I lived with my family in Italy and Belgium, and obviously could not participate in local politics. Upon exiting the corporate world in 2001 and settling down in my wife's hometown of Ebensburg, I started to follow local issues in the weekly newspaper and soon began to attend council and municipal authority meetings. As my interest continued to grow, I decided to seek a council seat in 2005. I won that election and have been on council ever since, serving as President since 2012.

Q: What leadership advice do you have for other local leaders?

First and foremost, I would say to always remember where your accountability lies – namely, with the residents and taxpayers of your specific jurisdiction. It is important to listen to what your constituents have to say about a given issue, and factor that input into your decision-making process. That does not mean that you need to blindly follow the majority opinion of your constituents – sometimes as a local official you may have more information about a subject, or perhaps need to think more strategically about an issue to make a better long-term decision. In such cases, it is always important to communicate your reasoning to the public.

Q: What has been your most rewarding experience as a municipal official?

Most gratifying to me is hearing out-of-town visitors to Ebensburg talk about what a nice community it is – from our welcoming residents to our historic look and feel, from our parks and recreational facilities to our safe, attractive, and walkable downtown area. Ebensburg has continuously invested in capital improvements over the years, and those investments go a long way to making this a very desirable community in which to live and work.

Q: What has been the greatest challenge in your position?

The financial aspects of operating the borough and providing the needed services to our residents and business owners have been and continue to be a constant struggle. Regulations and requirements imposed by the commonwealth and the federal government continue to eat up resources, while finding efficiencies and cost saving actions becomes more and more difficult.

Q: Thank you for serving on The League Board as a Legislative Committee Co-Chair. How has your involvement with The League helped you and your community?

My participation allows me the opportunity to interact regularly with an impressive group of people from across the commonwealth. Whether it be fellow council members, mayors, or municipal managers, from boroughs, townships or cities, everyone has a unique and different perspective on how best to serve our constituents. I also find The League staff to be extremely available and supportive, always happy to answer any questions that may arise.

Q: What advice do you have for people considering municipal government as a career?

I would certainly advise them to pursue such a career. I believe that quality municipal managers are in great demand, and the work itself is challenging, interesting, and constantly changing.

Q: As a proud Council President, what would you say are some of Ebensburg's greatest attributes?

One of our top attributes, which is easy to skip over, is that we are supported by a very strong Main Street Partnership group, a separate 501(c)(3) entity, who together with a multitude of dedicated volunteers, work hard to improve the appearance of the borough and organize and operate various events and festivals throughout the year. The schedule begins with a local art show dubbed “Art in Bloom” in April, followed by the “Wheels and Wings” motorcycle and classic car rally in June, a “Downtown Shutdown and Homecoming” festival in late July with live music and fireworks by the lake, free “Concerts in the Park” with live bands from mid-July through August, and our largest event, “PotatoFest,” in late September. Last but not least is our “Dickens of a Christmas” weekend in early December. Almost all residents participate in one or more of these events, which also draw in large numbers of outside visitors to our shops and restaurants.



Q: What programs or practices has Ebensburg implemented to address this edition's topic of "Public Health and Safety?"

Regarding public health, Ebensburg has focused on developing a wide range of recreational facilities for people of all ages. In addition to the parks, playgrounds and ballfields that are common to most municipalities, we have many other offerings which include a top-notch swimming pool, a Young People's Community Center with indoor basketball court and a full fitness center, our own stocked fishing lake with paddle boat rentals, an indoor/outdoor tennis center with a pro on the borough staff, an outdoor roller rink and a brand new dog park. Also, we are fortunate to be located along

the Ghost Town Trail (rails-to-trails) system, with a parking area and trailhead located in the borough.

From a public safety perspective, we continue to maintain our own local police department which offers 24/7/365 coverage. Over the past several years, we have increased our complement of full-time officers from 4 to 6. Also related to public safety, for the past 20 years Ebensburg and its residents/property owners have invested heavily in adding or replacing sidewalks along practically all major streets within several blocks of the center of town. This provides safe passage for pedestrians and encourages residents to be more active.



Municipal Reporter

We would love to feature your community in one of the six editions of our *Municipal Reporter* magazine!

2024 Topics Include:

February
Human Services

April
Diversity

June
Livable Communities

August
Leadership

October
Civility

December
Emergency Management

For details on submitting articles, please contact Debbie Bitting, League Director of Communications, at dbitting@pml.org.



PUBLIC OFFICIALS INVITATION

Please join the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture for the 108th Pennsylvania Farm Show at the PA Farm Show Complex in Harrisburg.

This year, the 2024 Farm Show theme is Connecting Our Communities. This theme speaks to the power of agriculture to connect our diverse communities in Pennsylvania. It's about nourishing our communities, enriching our relationships, and strengthening the Commonwealth for generations to come.

The 108th PA Farm Show will explore and celebrate the many people whose input into our agricultural industry create impact, cultivate resiliency, and ultimately, connect us all back to the farms and farmers of the Commonwealth. Agriculture is not just a way of life in Pennsylvania; it's the very thread that weaves our communities together. Through these connections, we share stories of who we are, our hope in the future, our reverence of the past -- strengthening bonds that transcend zip codes and town limits. In the rolling hills and bustling urban streets of our great state, agriculture is more than crops and livestock; it's a shared heritage and future that connects us all.

This theme was inspired by Governor Shapiro and this administration's dedication to bring people together and get things done for Pennsylvanians. Your commitment to agriculture as part of your work is a critical partnership for the Department and the Commonwealth, and we hope you can join us throughout the week. We wanted to highlight a few key events:

- The Farm Show will kick off with the **PA Preferred Reception**, held on Friday, January 5 from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. You can register [here](#).
- **Opening Ceremonies** will be held on Saturday, January 6 at 10:00 a.m. Please note this event will be outside at the steps to the Maclay Street lobby. Please contact Jordan King, Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs at PDA at jorking@pa.gov to RSVP.
- **Public Officials Day** on Wednesday January 10. This day provides opportunities for our public officials to network with farmers, agricultural support organizations, industry members and other officials from local, state, and federal government. The highlight of the day is the luncheon, which starts promptly at 11 a.m. in the PA Preferred Banquet Hall. Doors will open at 10:30 a.m. You can register [here](#).



Public Health and Safety



This year the *Municipal Reporter* is covering the issues of highest concern that municipal leaders identified during The League’s [ENVISION 2032 initiative](#), which included a broad survey and statewide forums. We are sharing articles and information relating to these very important topics of concern – Infrastructure, Municipal Finance, Equity and Civic Engagement, Community Development, Sustainability, Public Health & Safety, and Economic Vitality.

This December edition, our sixth issue this year, covers the topic of Public Health and Safety.

As noted in our [ENVISION 2032 publication](#):

“We need to look at public health and safety through a fresh lens.”

In The League’s recent survey, Pennsylvania’s municipal leaders identified public safety as one of their top five concerns for the future. What’s more, throughout the ENVISION Forums, leaders from municipalities of all sizes and locations consistently raised one issue: While historically it made sense to run single-purpose departments for fire, police, healthcare, and mental health services, today, these functions have become tightly interconnected. Accordingly, a new, integrated definition and approach to public health and safety are needed.

Please see an excerpt on Public Health and Safety from ENVISION 2032 on the following two pages. For more information and municipal actions, check out our [ENVISION 2032 publication](#).

**ENVISION
2032**

*Charting the Future for
Pennsylvania’s Municipalities*



PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

“We need to look at public health and safety through a fresh lens.”

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While there is a long-held perception of local governments as proudly independent and resistant to partnering, change has come. Half of the municipalities in The League’s survey are already participating in inter-municipal cooperation to provide police, fire, or emergency medical services, and another 30% are planning to do so.

A Time Like No Other

The early 2020s proved to be a period of historic change in the public health and safety domains. The COVID-19 pandemic became the most extreme public health crisis of the past hundred years, resulting in the loss of nearly 50,000 lives across the Commonwealth during its first two years alone. During the same period, the racial justice movement and calls for police reform following the killing of George Floyd had far-reaching societal impacts not seen since the 1960s.

TODAY’S REALITIES

- ◆ **Local approaches to safety and justice are transforming.** Community leaders and law enforcement agencies across the Commonwealth are working to increase transparency, update training programs and policies, recruit and hire officers who reflect the communities they serve, reduce use-of-force incidents, and increase accountability. At the same time, municipalities are trying new methods to handle encounters involving mental health, drug addiction, and domestic violence situations more effectively.
- ◆ **Volunteer fire and emergency services are in crisis.** Many municipalities, particularly those in rural areas, are grappling with an urgent reality: volunteer fire departments may no longer be a sustainable model. In 2018, the Senate Resolution 6 (SR6) Commission’s analysis led to the recommendation that communities consider transitioning from heavy reliance on part-time fire and paramedic volunteers to hybrid models staffed mainly by trained career professionals, to improve the delivery of emergency services. The fiscal impact of this shift is of paramount concern for many localities.
- ◆ **Municipalities are joining forces.** How vital services are delivered and paid for is undergoing a paradigm shift. Municipal leaders are grappling with how to downsize or restructure their departments and develop robust recruitment, training, and retention efforts to avert gaps in essential services. The financial and operational implications are profound, propelling many municipalities to pursue shared solutions within their regions.

MOVING FORWARD

Municipal leaders attending the ENVISION Forums strongly agreed that protecting their communities' health, safety, security, and resiliency is paramount. They concur that additional services and personnel are needed in all health and safety-related departments and that adopting a more regional approach is often beneficial. Beyond tapping into all available state and grant funding to expand their capacity, municipalities' plans include:

- ◆ Anticipating and planning for the possibility of needing to move away from relying on volunteer fire and EMT services.
- ◆ Engaging in more local and regional collaborations.
- ◆ Developing interdisciplinary training that encompasses health, mental health, and other fields for police and first responders.
- ◆ Conducting communications campaigns to change public perceptions and restore trust in police departments.

In 2018, the SR6 Commission developed an extensive list of recommendations to address shortages in emergency and fire services.

The recommendations are in response to demands for round-the-clock coverage, faster response times, and more-arduous certifications that come at a time when volunteerism is impacted by residents' ever-growing home, family, and career obligations. The recommendations include increasing funding sources, promoting regionalization of services, and developing initiatives to attract and support emergency service personnel.

MUNICIPALITIES IN ACTION

- ◆ **Drone technology delivers positive results for the Western Berks Fire Department (WBFD).** Serving four municipalities with a combination of career and volunteer members, the WBFD responds to about 1,000 calls annually. To combat dwindling emergency staffing, firefighters proposed an innovative approach – using drones to supplement and assist in high-risk incidents. A drone was purchased using an equipment grant from the Pennsylvania State Fire Commissioners. Community demonstrations generated enthusiasm and private donations that enabled the department to add a thermal/zoom camera and lighting system. The results have been dramatic from its first deployment, when it located a missing older adult in a several hundred-acre cornfield within 20 minutes. The drone team has been called to dozens of emergency incidents and public events and has assisted fire, police, SWAT, and search and rescue operations in three counties. Successes range from supporting ground fire operations and finding lost children in crowds to providing intelligence to incident commanders dealing with barricaded and armed subjects, which has informed decision-making and helped keep first responders safe.
- ◆ **The City of Altoona revamped its police recruitment and training.** Like other localities, recruiting and retaining police officers in Altoona has become much more difficult. In response, the City has implemented an extensive field training program for all police officers that enter the workforce. Recruits are supervised by Field Training Officers skilled in adult learning and receive specialized training in critical areas such as de-escalation and addiction/ overdose recognition, using scenario and virtual reality teaching methods.
- ◆ **The City of Franklin focuses on domestic violence.** Funded with grants from the Federal Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) and Pennsylvania's Stop Violence Against Women fund, the Venango County District Attorney's Office is working to strengthen the criminal justice system's response to violence against women and to support and enhance services for victims. The program facilitates collaborative community response among city and county law enforcement, judicial offices, and victim and health services. Together, they offer multidisciplinary professional training and provide an array of services to residents, including victim resource kits that include a secure smartphone, whistle, and other items to protect the privacy and safety of those at risk of violence.
- ◆ **Living well in Bethel Park Municipality.** As a participant in Live Well Allegheny, an initiative of the Allegheny County Health Department, Bethel Park is actively working to improve its residents' health and wellness. The municipality hosts outreach and educational activities, including a Wellness Summit in collaboration with the local school district and a monthly Speaker Series featuring experts on various health and life skills topics. Originally formatted as live events, the speaker program successfully transitioned to virtual during the pandemic, which has expanded audience reach to as many as 1,700 viewers.
- ◆ **Lower Merion Township uses virtual reality to enhance law enforcement training.** The township's police department received a federal grant to acquire an advanced virtual reality training simulator that they use to help first responders hone their de-escalation and crisis intervention skills. The training program combines classroom learning with virtual reality scenarios developed by police officers and mental health and social services professionals across the county. Participants report that the method enables them to practice active listening, empathy, and rapport building more frequently, in the context of situations they may encounter.

PFAS and Municipal Water Supplies and Wastewater

BY NANCY Q. BURKE, ESQ.; MELISSA A. CLARKE, ESQ.; AND HEATHER KEMP, ESQ.¹, SAUL EWING, LLP



“PFAS” is an acronym for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, a family of thousands of widely used manmade chemicals that resist grease, oil, water and heat. PFAS has been used in firefighting foams, protective coatings and stain-resistant garments and carpets. PFAS are mobile and persistent; they bioaccumulate while resisting degradation in the environment (hence the nickname “forever chemicals.”). They’re also ubiquitous, present in personal care products like shampoo and dental floss. As a result, approximately 98-99% of people have PFAS in their bodies, and studies have shown negative health outcomes with low levels of chronic exposure to PFAS.² Problematically, PFAS make their way into municipal water supplies and wastewater.

Given how widespread PFAS are, many states have begun regulating

them by establishing maximum contaminant levels³ and instituting PFAS product bans.⁴ On January 14, 2023, Pennsylvania’s Department of Environmental Protection (PADEP) adopted a new rule known as the Safe Drinking Water PFAS MCL Rule (“PFAS MCL Rule”).⁵ The PFAS MCL Rule sets a maximum allowable level in drinking water for two PFAS compounds, PFOA and PFOS at 14 parts per trillion (ppt) and 18 ppt, respectively.

Under the PFAS MCL Rule, initial compliance monitoring for community and non-transient noncommunity water systems serving more than 350 persons and for all bottled, vended, retail and bulk hauling water systems begins January 1, 2024. Initial monitoring for community and non-transient non-community water systems serving 350 or fewer persons begins

January 1, 2025. Because PFAS are so pervasive, care must be taken to avoid cross-contamination of samples, and sample collection by specially trained professionals is advisable.

Understanding PFAS Risks

Local governments, including water utilities and municipal solid waste facilities, serve as passive receivers of PFAS chemicals. PFAS come from various “upstream” sources — industries, household products, even human waste — and flow through municipal facilities. Problematically, currently available methods of wastewater treatment do not remove PFAS, causing wastewater treatment discharges and sludges to inadvertently spread PFAS, including to drinking water supplies.

Municipalities can develop a better understanding of PFAS contamination risk by inventorying potential PFAS release areas. Examples of locations with potential for soil, groundwater or surface water PFAS contamination include anywhere firefighting foam⁶ was sprayed in the past, such as current and former fire training areas and fire house locations, airports, historic landfills and dumping locations. Prioritizing the sampling of wells at or near these locations may be advisable. If PFAS are detected in drinking water, the site inventory may provide clues to source(s) and potential extent of contamination.

Addressing and Funding PFAS Contamination

Certain technologies will remove PFAS from drinking water supplies, including activated carbon adsorption, ion exchange resins and high-pressure membranes. While such technologies can be used in drinking water treatment facilities, they are expensive. Thankfully, some funding may be available for local governments.

For instance, the Pennsylvania Infrastructure Investment Authority (“PENNVEST”) Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances Remediation Program (“PENNVEST PFAS Remediation Program”) was established to provide funding to remediate PFAS present in public drinking water supply systems when the PFAS source is not related to a qualified former military installation. Another program exists for qualified military installations and is administered by the PA Department of Revenue.

Faced with thousands of lawsuits over their firefighting foam products, several companies agreed to settlements that establish funds to help water suppliers cover PFAS sampling and remediation costs.



In June 2023, Chemours, Corteva and E.I. DuPont de Nemours and Company (collectively, “DuPont”) agreed to pay up to \$1.19 billion into such a fund, and in a separate agreement, 3M agreed to pay up to \$10.3 billion. These funds are available to almost all municipal drinking water suppliers. An official website, sanctioned by the court overseeing the cases, provides information on the settlements, and claims can be filed there.⁷

The DuPont and 3M settlement agreements are lengthy and include conditions and releases of claims. Moneys from the funds will be allocated according to a formula based in part on flow and concentration data. **Importantly, if an eligible public water supplier did not file an objection or request to be excluded, it is bound by the DuPont and 3M settlements, and claims against the settling companies for PFAS in the water supply now and in the future are released.** Therefore, it is important to file claims for testing costs and, if PFAS is detected in the water supply, for cleanup costs by the required deadlines. □



SAUL EWING

LLP

¹ *Saul Ewing regularly assists The League and its members in state and federal regulatory matters. The authors of this article are attorneys in the firm of Saul Ewing, LLP and can be reached by contacting their colleague, Bill Warren, at the firm's Harrisburg Office by phone (717-979-5570) or email (william.warren@saul.com). Saul Ewing is a part of the Business Leaders Network and has represented The League since 1993 in a variety of matters.*

² *Environmental Protection Agency, EPA's Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) Action Plan 9, 13 (2019), https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2019-02/documents/pfas_action_plan_021319_508compliant_1.pdf.*

³ *The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is also in the process of creating a national limit for some PFAS substances in drinking water. The EPA expects to finalize this rule by the end of 2023.*

⁴ *Pennsylvania's state legislature recently introduced bills impacting food packaging containing PFAS. Senate Bill 1351 prohibits the manufacturing, distribution, sale or offer for sale of any food packaging containing PFAS in any amount. It would also require manufacturers to post a certificate of compliance at the place of business to attest that the food packaging follows the requirements outlined in the legislation. Likewise, Senate Bill 302 would restrict firefighting foam containing PFAS.*

⁵ 25 PA. CODE CH. 109

⁶ *In many cases, municipal airports and fire departments were required by federal law to use firefighting foam containing PFAS chemicals.*

⁷ *Public Water System Settlements, available at: pfaswatersettlement.com*

Current Issues Facing Police – Recruitment and Retention

BY MICHAEL J. MCGRATH, SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE, EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT COORDINATOR, LOWER MERION TOWNSHIP POLICE DEPARTMENT



The post-pandemic landscape is reshaping how police departments need to operate. From recruiting to community engagement, to responding to mental health incidents to safeguarding their own officers' mental fitness, police leaders and their officers are facing challenges that they have not seen for many years.

The leading challenge not only in Pennsylvania but nationally is the inability to replace sworn officer positions due to retirements and attrition. Not only is there an issue with staffing police departments, 9-1-1 Emergency Dispatch Centers across the state are reporting significant staffing issues with vacancies as high as 25 percent in Northeast Pennsylvania. How severe is the problem? In Pennsylvania, Philadelphia currently only has about 5,400 of their 6,380 authorized sworn positions filled (-15 percent). Pittsburgh has 100 of its 900 positions vacant (-11 percent).

The International Association of Chiefs of Police says that the difficulty in recruiting law enforcement officers is not due to one cause. Current political, societal and economic forces are all simultaneously at play in shaping the challenge of filling vacancies. They are both systemic in nature and reflect individual level considerations, making solutions

to the problem particularly challenging.

There are a variety of explanations for these shortages. Cited most frequently are burnout after the civil unrest in 2020 and the public perception of policing which limits interest in the profession with a detrimental impact on recruitment. Whether it is the misperception created by the fictionalized portrayal of police on television or in movies, or the impact of cellphone recorded interactions between the police and the public, many additional factors also create barriers for recruiting new officers.

Police officials involved in recruiting share that policing is facing the same challenges that many other industries are facing. Where Baby Boomers were more likely to spend their careers in one field and sometimes with one employer, recent generations have focused on the value of work-life balance in making their employment decisions. The desire for flexible hours and guaranteed time off is not a typical feature of policing nor in most public service positions. Leaving a job after a few years is no longer considered a detriment to a successful career and is in fact more commonplace. This is a reality that needs to be addressed in our efforts to fill vacancies.

Additionally, recruiters point out that not only is there a low number of individuals applying to police departments, but that for those that apply, the quality of the applicants is often poor. While the passing rate for any candidate to succeed in a police application process varies from agency to agency, an agency that utilizes a thorough background investigation is finding it not uncommon for applicants who appear to be strong candidates to fail the background check or disclose disqualifying information later in the hiring process.

Philadelphia reports that about 2 percent of their applicant pool makes it through the process. Additionally, Pennsylvania has more police departments than any other state in the country which creates an environment where multiple agencies geographically close find themselves in fierce competition to attract and secure the best candidates in the area. Another unique factor is that in Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania State Police provide police services for 82 percent of the state's land area and for the approximately 980 municipalities with police departments, 72 percent are staffed with fewer than 10 officers. The impact of these vacancies varies in each of these agencies.

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well as the elimination of services and special units are the most obvious outcomes. Specifically, this means police departments are, or will be providing less community outreach, fewer school-based programs and reduced juvenile services to name a few. More significantly and with consequences that may not be immediately evident, training and education of officers is typically one of the first things that is reduced when staffing is reduced.

Another casualty is the reduction of traffic safety operations. Regardless of cyclical or regional crime trends, the most frequent complaint fielded by police agencies is speeding and aggressive driving. With pedestrian fatalities at a 40 year high in the United States, any reduction in the time police have to spend on traffic safety related programs is a detriment.

To begin to address recruitment issues, agencies need to take a hard look at their entire process. Depending on the agency, the recruitment process can take between four months and a full year. The process is impacted by a variety of factors. First Class Townships and Boroughs are required to follow regimented Civil Service regulations for police hiring. Second Class Townships and Home Rule communities have more flexibility in how they structure their process.

The typical recruitment campaign of old involved posting advertisements for applicants on various law enforcement related websites, issuing PSA's and visiting a few local job fairs. Only very large departments would test annually with the majority of departments going multiple years between

testing processes. To be competitive in the current employment market, recruitment is now a year-round endeavor. Municipalities need to recognize that they have to provide the commitment of resources to their police departments to make a concerted effort to fill these vacancies. This means attending job fairs continually even when a recruitment test isn't in the offering.

Expanding recruitment time and resources is just the beginning. Funding billboard advertisements, reviewing your digital strategy and working with regional partners must be considered. A Facebook page alone does not cut it. The newer generation is more likely to be on Instagram and YouTube. We need to be as well.

Members of command should take a few minutes and go online and fill out one of their own department applications. If you discover that it takes multiple clicks to locate the application on the municipal or department webpage, that is the first place to make immediate improvements.

If the department isn't taking applications currently, future applicants should have a place where they can log their interest in being informed of upcoming recruitment events. Forward thinking departments are offering test taking practice sessions to help demystify the process and provide helpful feedback to potential applicants. Testing days and times should be reviewed to determine if the hours and days of the week are more or less likely to attract applicants. Some agencies are experimenting with on-line testing modules. Ride along programs and internships should be encouraged

and made available for potential prospects.

Many departments over the last several decades have required that applicants must have completed Act 120 training to be eligible for hire. It is time to review this mindset for two reasons. First it limits the number of applications that you will receive, and data shows that the diversity of your applicant pool is increased when subsidized academy training is provided.

Lastly, communities and their police departments need to look at how they are marketing their police recruitment efforts. Focusing on showing officers conducting aggressive police activity such as SWAT operations, foot pursuits or arrest scenarios does not resonate with today's job applicants. Any officer on the street for more than a few months will tell you that the majority of their day is spent resolving problems, helping people and serving the vulnerable in our society. Showing the real day-to-day activity of the job, which is people centric and service oriented, is now considered the best approach to attract new job seekers with the intent to retain them for the long run. Recruitment and retention are issues that will be with us for the foreseeable future, it is high time that we recognize the challenges that we are facing and address them head-on. □

Hindsight is 20/20: Lessons Learned from the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic

BY GRETCHEN K. LOVE, ESQUIRE, CAMPBELL DURRANT



It seems like yesterday and also an eternity ago. Initially, the uncertainty of the pandemic and its impact on the employment setting was daunting. There were more questions than answers and legal precedent was almost non-existent. Yet, decisions were made, principles espoused, and litigation ensued. Almost four years later, courts have provided some clarity to employers regarding their decision-making during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, employees sued their employers over policies which required them to get vaccinated or test and mask. In these lawsuits, employees alleged violations of federal statutes and the United States Constitution.

In *Beard v. Philadelphia Corporation for Aging*, 2023 WL 4685976 (E.D. Pa. July 21, 2023), an employee claimed that her employer “regarded” her as disabled because she refused to comply with its COVID-19 mitigation policies. While, in general, the Americans with Disabilities Act protects employees from disability discrimination in the workplace, it also provides protection to employees who are not disabled but are “perceived as” or “regarded as” disabled. In this case, the employer, PCA, implemented a COVID-19 policy, which required employees who refused to get vaccinated to submit to masking and testing protocols. Beard argued that by establishing COVID-19

mitigation practices, PCA “singled out unvaccinated employees like her for not complying with the mandates” and subsequently “regarded” her as disabled with COVID-19 or an impaired immune system.

Relying on *Speaks v. Health System Management*, 2022 WL 3448649 (W.D.N.C. Aug. 17, 2022), the District Court found that PCA did not “regard” the employee as having a disability when it required the employee to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine or otherwise apply for an exemption or follow its testing and masking protocols. The District Court noted legal precedent existing in other jurisdictions which had consistently recognized that an employee’s refusal to get a vaccine required by the employer is not a disability and was “a personal choice” that was not protected under the ADA. Consequently, the District Court found that “company-wide COVID-19 mitigation policies like PCA’s do not mean that the employer regards all employees as disabled under the ADA.”

Similarly, in *Chancey v. BASF*, 2023 WL 6598065 (5th Cir. Oct. 10, 2023), an employee challenged his employer’s COVID-19 policy which required masking, providing information regarding his vaccine status, socially distancing for others, handwashing and temperature checks. The employee objected to the mitigation strategies because he believed that they were not effective. Because Chancey

would not comply with BASF’s policies, BASF instituted a number of protocols including requiring Chancey to remain 6 feet away from co-workers, isolating him from common work areas, making him work remotely and other measures. Chancey challenged these additional protocols because he believed he was being treated like a “safety hazard” or “direct threat” due to his vaccine status under the “regarded as” provision of the ADA.

In responding to BASF’s motion to dismiss, the Court explained that to state a claim for employment discrimination under the “regarded as” prong of the ADA, Chancey must demonstrate that he was “subjected to an action prohibited under the ADA because of an actual or perceived physical or mental impairment whether or not the impairment limits or is perceived to limit a major life activity.” The Court found that Chancey could not proceed with his claim against BASF because “merely being at risk of developing a condition is insufficient to state a disability-discrimination claim under the ADA.” See also *Shell v. Burlington N. Santa Fe Ry. Co.*, 941 F.3d 331, 336 (7th Cir. 2019) (holding that the “fear” of developing an ADA-qualifying condition based on an underlying condition was insufficient).

Another employee presented a novel theory (based on the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution and the

Genetic Information and Non-Discrimination Act (GINA)) to challenge COVID-19 mitigation measures instituted by his employer. In *Homer v. Penn State University*, 2023 WL 5154699 (W.D. Pa. August 10, 2023), an employee challenged Penn State's masking policy which required (prior to the wide-spread availability of vaccines) employees to "mask up or pack up." Penn State subsequently modified its policy in August 2021 and required only those non-union, unvaccinated employees or employees who did not disclose their vaccine status to wear masks and test. Employees were also permitted to seek a religious accommodation from the COVID-19 vaccine, masking, and testing policies.

Homer was employed as the Physical Plant and Facilities Manager. During the summer of 2021 (before the second iteration of the making policy became effective), an HR employee discovered Homer not complying with the masking requirement. Homer received a written reprimand despite claiming that he was being provided an accommodation by his direct supervisor. Thereafter, Homer was written up lying about his vaccine status and for failing to get a routine COVID-19 test as was required by the policy. Ultimately, Homer was terminated because he failed to comply with the university's masking policy.

Challenging his termination, Homer initiated legal action against Penn State. Homer asserted that Penn State violated his Fourth Amendment rights by "intentionally intrud[ing] on his privacy when they search and seized his genetic information and DNA without his informed consent and permitted his DNA to be

given to third parties for research purposes only in a compulsory fashion and under the threat of termination without justification."

In analyzing the sufficiency of Homer's Fourth Amendment claim, the District Court found that Penn State's COVID-19 testing policy was reasonable under the special needs balancing test which applies to Fourth Amendment intrusions that are unrelated to law enforcement activities. When analyzing this exception, courts balance four factors (1) the nature of the privacy interest affected; (2) the character of the intrusion; (3) the nature and immediacy of the government concern; and (4) the efficacy of this means of addressing the concern." *Id.* citing *Vernonia Sch. District v. Acton*, 515 U.S. 646, 653 (1995). The Court dismissed this claim finding that Penn State's COVID-19 test policy satisfied the special needs test.

Homer also asserted a claim under GINA, which prohibits employers from requesting, requiring or purchasing genetic information from an employee or family member. Genetic tests include information about the manifestation of a disease or disorder of the employee or a family member. Specifically, Homer complained that his DNA was extracted from his saliva/mucosal samples and given to Spectrum DNA for research purposes.

In analyzing this claim, the court noted that COVID-19 tests are not genetic tests. *Id.* citing *Baum v. Dunmire Prop. Mgmt, Inc.*, 2022 WL 889097 (D. Colo. March 25, 2022); *Gross v. N. Dak. Univ. Sys.*, 2022 WL 2612121 (D.N.D. January 10, 2022). Relying on a recent case, *McKinley v. Princeton Univ.*, 2023 WL 3168026 (D.N.J. Apr. 28, 2023), the District Court found Homer's legal claim insufficient because he failed

to assert any fact (beyond mere speculation) that his DNA was used for a purpose beyond the COVID-19 test.

While these cases support employer-initiated mitigation measures, their application is limited to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the Biden-Harris Administration's announcement of the end of the COVID-19 public health emergency, federal agencies (like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the Center for Disease Control) have altered their guidance relative to workplace policies requiring vaccinations, testing and masks. New guidance is conditioned upon the local factors, including community outbreak levels and community spread data. Updated guidance can be found at <https://www.eeoc.gov/wysk/what-you-should-know-about-covid-19-and-ada-rehabilitation-act-and-other-eeo-laws> which was last updated on May 15, 2023. In addition, the attorneys at Campbell Durrant may assist your community in updating mitigation protocols to ensure that they are legally compliant. □





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U-COMP

Unemployment Compensation Trust

UC – 1609 Form, Employer Information Form

SUBMITTED BY ELIZABETH HENRY, U-COMP TRUSTS MEMBER SERVICES MANAGER

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<p style="text-align: center;">INSTRUCTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS WHEN COMPLETING THIS FORM</p> <p>PA Employer UC Account Number: This seven-digit number can be found on the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> New Employer Certification Letter (UC-488) Notice of Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation Responsibilities (UC-851) Contribution Rate Notice (UC-523) Request for Relief from Charges (UC-449) Notice of Financial Determination (UC-449(1)) Monthly Notice of Compensation Charged (UC-540) <p>Employer Address: Enter your mailing address or the address where you want the Employer's Notice of Application (UC-45), unemployment fact-finding forms, and determinations to be mailed. If your company uses a Third-Party Administrator (TPA) to handle your unemployment claims, please enter the address for the TPA.</p> <p>Contact Person, Email Address: Provide the name, title, phone number, and email address of the individual in your organization that the department can contact if additional separation information is needed.</p>	

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- Pension or annuity package information (if applicable)
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Legislative Status Report STATE



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All legislation can be found on the General Assembly's website:

legis.state.pa.us

Legislative Update

Guidance for Municipalities Considering Short-Term Rental Ordinances

Several municipalities across Pennsylvania have recently considered ordinances for homeowners operating in the short-term rental industry. These ordinances seek to create new requirements for homeowners, such as providing a copy of their Pennsylvania Sales, Use and Hotel Occupancy Tax license as part of the short-term rental applications they are required to submit to the municipality.

The Department of Revenue is reminding municipal officials that third-party booking agents often collect state and local taxes on behalf of their hosts. That means that many homeowners active in the short-term rental industry **are not required by law** to obtain a Sales, Use and Hotel Occupancy Tax license from the Department of Revenue. The Department will not issue a license when it is not required.

Here is the general rule: a private homeowner who exclusively (100%) uses a third-party booking agent to rent

their home does not need to have a separate license. The booking agent is required to collect and remit state and local taxes if it is acting on behalf of the homeowner.

In other situations where private homeowners are renting out their houses for a period of less than 30 days and are making bookings directly with customers without a booking agent, those homeowners are required to obtain a license from the Department.

Municipalities are encouraged to keep these legal requirements in mind as they consider ordinances that create new requirements for short-term rental operators. The Department of Revenue is working with various organizations to provide information on the existing laws and requirements that apply to homeowners operating in this industry.

Please contact Katharine S. Paisley, Policy Director for the PA Department of Revenue, at kapaisley@pa.gov with any questions.

2024 Local Government Center Awards For Local Government Excellence

Nominations for the 2024 Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence are now open. Each year, the Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence are presented to local government leaders who have demonstrated exceptional dedication to improving public services through innovative projects or initiatives. [Submit your nominations](#) for the 2024 Governor's Awards for Local Government Excellence now through January 26, 2024.

Broadband News!

Pennsylvania's Digital Equity Plan is available for review and public comment until January 8, 2024. The Broadband Authority is also hosting public comment sessions on the Plan both in person and virtually.

Please use this link for more information: [Digital Equity \(DE\) Act - PA Department of Community & Economic Development](#)

Legislation Affecting Local Government

Vacant and Blighted Property Registration

Location: Senate Urban Affairs and Housing Committee, November 28, 2023

[House Bill 775 \(PN 1357\)](#), introduced by Representative Tim Twardzik, would amend Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) allowing municipalities to establish, by ordinance, a vacant and blighted property registry and collect a registry fee.

A municipality that elects to pass a blighted and vacant property registry ordinance, and impose and collect a fee, shall compile and maintain a list of vacant and blighted properties. Under the legislation, a registration fee shall be imposed for each year that a vacant and blighted property is not in compliance with the municipal code. A fee schedule is provided in the legislation: the first year on the registry is a \$500 fee; the second year on the registry is a \$1,000 fee; the third and fourth year on the registry is a \$2,000 fee; the fifth through eighth years on the registry is a \$3,500 fee; and nine or more years on the registry is a \$5,000 fee. The bill lists several exemptions from the fees, such as government properties, those under active rehabilitation and those where the property owner shows economic hardship.

A property owner that fails to comply with the registration requirements would be penalized \$25 a day for residential properties and \$50 a day for commercial properties for each

day the property owner fails to pay the fee. The amount of any unpaid fee shall constitute a lien against the property.

Additionally, municipalities would need to establish a process to remove a compliant property from the registry, and an appeals process must be available to property owners. Lastly, municipalities with existing vacant and blighted property registration ordinances may continue to operate without any limitations.

Mixed-Use Redevelopment of Shopping Malls Act

Location: House Local Government Committee, October 27, 2023

[House Bill 1799 \(PN 2215\)](#), introduced by Representative Joshua Siegel, would create a schedule of tax exemptions to encourage redevelopment of shopping malls into mixed-use spaces and affordable housing.

The bill would allow municipalities to adopt an ordinance or resolution establishing a tax exemption. The exemption would be granted on the assessment attributable to the actual cost of the redevelopment construction or up to a maximum cost uniformly established by the municipality.

- For the first 10 years of redevelopment, 100 percent of the eligible assessment is exempt.
- 100 percent of the eligible assessment would be exempt for an additional two years if at least one of the following is completed by the date established by the municipality, or an additional five years if at least two of the following are completed by the date established by the municipality:
 - a minimum amount of affordable housing as determined by the municipality;
 - improved energy efficiency;
 - installation of renewable energy providing 50 percent of the redevelopment's electricity;
 - creation of green or open space;
 - creation of recreational space, pathways or farmers markets;
 - installation of charging stations for electric cars;
 - access to public transit; or
 - the project is subject to a labor agreement.

The bill would also establish a Mixed-Use Redevelopment Board, provide a process for repayment if the property has a serious, unabated code violation or permit denial and establish property eligibility requirements and procedure to apply for a tax exemption.

Municipal Police Pension Credit Buy Back

**Location: House State Government Committee,
December 12, 2023**

House Bill 1910 (PN 2421), introduced by Representative Brian Munroe, would amend Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) requiring municipalities to provide full-time vested police officers the option to purchase up to five years of their previous part-time or full-time employment for pension benefit purposes. This bill would not apply to cities of the first class.

The bill provides for the calculation to determine the cost to an officer. A police officer would be ineligible to receive this benefit if the officer receives or is entitled to receive a pension benefit from another fund, or if the officer's military service credits when combined with past police service credits exceeds five years.

Lastly, this bill would not impact the portability and transfer of credits between pension plans within the PA Municipal Retirement System. □

House and Senate Session Days 2024



<u>House</u>	<u>Senate</u>
January 2	January 2, 16-17
February 6	February 5-7
March 18-20, 25-27	March 18-20

**reminder
session dates are subject to change*

Legislative Locator

Be sure to read the electronic Legislative Locator, produced bimonthly on the opposite months of the *Municipal Reporter*, for updates on legislation.

The graphic features a large speech bubble containing an icon of a document in an envelope and a circular logo of a legislative building. The text is in a bold, sans-serif font.



Local Strategies for Law Enforcement Recruitment and Retention

BY YUCEL ORS, DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME PREVENTION AT THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

In the face of pressing challenges confronting some law enforcement agencies nationwide, the U.S. Department of Justice unveiled a new report: “[Recruitment and Retention for the Modern Law Enforcement Agency](#).” Published by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS Office) and the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), this report signals an urgent call for reform in recruitment and retention strategies. Below are highlights from the report’s recommendations about the pivotal role local elected officials can play in supporting police department recruitment and retention programs during this critical period.

1. Influence Recruitment and Eligibility

Local elected officials can advocate for alignment between eligibility requirements and community needs. By engaging diverse community members, officials bridge the gap between law enforcement and the community. You can champion updated eligibility criteria focusing on character traits and community-aligned values, ensuring standards remain high. Elected leaders can endorse the use of technology for efficient applications and consistent evaluation of online behavior, enhancing transparency. Encouraging evidence-based testing and assessing emotional intelligence and conflict resolution

skills reshape the selection process to align with modern demands.

2. Enhance Training Methods

Officials play a key role in modernizing training methods. You can support a shift toward community-oriented mindsets and positive reinforcement. Collaboration with advocacy groups enriches recruits’ understanding of community dynamics. By endorsing mentorship programs and involving new officers in community outreach, officials strengthen the officer-public bond. They can also ensure that conflict resolution training, delivered by instructors reflecting organizational values, becomes a fundamental aspect of law enforcement education.

3. Improve Benefits and Incentives

Local elected officials can advocate for attractive benefits aligned with the preferences of the newer workforce. By assessing retirement options, offering portable investments and directing resources toward retention bonuses, officials can make law enforcement careers more desirable. This includes nontraditional benefits such as flexible schedules, parental leave and mental health



coverage. Addressing specific concerns like childcare barriers fosters inclusivity within law enforcement agencies.

4. Prioritize Officer Wellness

Officials can collaborate with public-private partnerships to address officers' well-being. You can advocate for affordable childcare, encourage the reevaluation of shift schedules to promote work-life balance and support the implementation of comprehensive wellness programs. Ensuring confidentiality in mental health care and involving officers in program development create a supportive environment. Acknowledging and accommodating diverse wellness needs should become essential components of wellness initiatives, fostering a healthier workforce.

5. Shape Organizational Culture

Elected leaders can drive change by advocating for a positive organizational culture. You can promote cultural assessments, endorse zero-tolerance policies against discrimination, and encourage open engagement with the community. Transparent communication addressing workplace inequities builds trust among officers and the community, fostering an environment of mutual respect and understanding.

6. Support Educational Partnerships

Partnerships with educational institutions are instrumental in shaping future law enforcement professionals. Local elected officials can collaborate with high schools and higher education institutions to create specialized courses and workshops. You can actively involve students from diverse disciplines, ensuring a broad talent pool for law enforcement careers. By endorsing these initiatives, officials empower educational institutions to prepare students effectively for law enforcement roles.

Local elected officials have an opportunity and responsibility to influence the modernization of law enforcement practices while also embracing and supporting broader public safety ecosystems. Through advocacy, support and policy influence, you can serve as a catalyst for positive change, fostering law enforcement agencies that are not only efficient and effective but also deeply connected and responsive to the communities they serve. □

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Public Finance

THE PLGIT BOARD OF TRUSTEES

THE VOICE OF YOUR MUNICIPALITY AT THE PENNSYLVANIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT
INVESTMENT TRUST

BY TAMARA KEMMLER, PLGIT SENIOR MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE

Most PLGIT Investors know that the Trust is somehow unique among investment options in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Unlike other financial institutions, PLGIT's members actually own and operate the Trust.

PLGIT serves more than 3,216 local governments and schools in Pennsylvania, oversees more than \$10 billion in assets (as of September 30, 2023), and provides Investors with tools like online access, procurement cards and more. PLGIT invests solely in investments permitted across all codes governing local governments, schools, and municipal authorities in Pennsylvania.

Unlike a bank, which serves stockholders, PLGIT is governed by a Board of Trustees who are chosen from seven statewide sponsoring associations -- a critical structural difference that sets PLGIT apart. Who votes for the members of that Board? You do, as a PLGIT Investor.

That vote is critically important, because PLGIT's Trustees play a vital role. The Board you help elect performs important work in the oversight of your investments, and

helps to ensure that the stewardship of those investments is sound.

Nominated by you, elected by you

The 11 members of the all-volunteer Board of Trustees are nominated each year by the sponsoring associations, which include: The League, the Pennsylvania Municipal League; CCAP, the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania; PMAA, the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association; PSATS, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Supervisors; PSAB, the Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs; PSATC, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners; and PASA, the Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators.

Those nominees are, in turn, voted for and elected by PLGIT Investors. The Board of Trustees meets quarterly in public meetings to review, discuss, and take action on the business of the Trust.

To assure adequate representation of the interests of the variety of participating entities, the Trust's nominating committee must

nominate at least one candidate representing each of the following: boroughs, cities, counties, municipal authorities, school districts, townships of the first class, and townships of the second class. All Trustees must be either an elected member or full-time employee of their respective municipality or school district. The Trust seeks to maintain a Board that represents a cross-section of entities, geographic regions, and municipalities of varying sizes. (For a full listing of PLGIT Board Members see www.plgit.com)

At its most recent elections in May of 2023, Kathleen DePuy was elected as the Board's new President. She has served as a PLGIT trustee since 2014, has been a Councilperson for the Borough of Whitehall in Allegheny County since 1990 and served as President of that council in 1992, 1997, 2010, 2017 and 2023. She was also President of Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs (PSAB) in 2013.

Having representatives like Kathleen DePuy in place puts decision-making responsibility in the hands of people with first-hand knowledge of issues that affect local governments.

Ownership – and stewardship – on your behalf

PLGIT’s Declaration of Trust is a governing document which was initially drafted in 1981 and has been amended over time. The Declaration of Trust gives the Trustees broad decision-making powers, stating “the Trustees shall have exclusive and absolute control ... over the affairs of the Trust to the same extent as if the Trustees were the sole owners of the Trust Property.” This means that the Trustees have the power to guide PLGIT.

While the PLGIT Board of Trustees is not directly responsible for Trust investments, they do have important policy-making and oversight responsibilities which have a direct bearing on the success of the Trust. These duties include:

Reviewing vendors who work for the Trust. The Board of Trustees reviews the performance of service providers such as the investment advisor/administrator, legal counsel, auditors, and others. The Board also reviews proposals and contracts for new services and vendors for the Trust.

Monitoring the performance of the PLGIT portfolio. PLGIT Trustees are responsible for being informed and aware of the performance of PLGIT investments and how their own policy decisions may be affecting that performance.

Receiving and reviewing the annual audit. Not only is the PLGIT Board of Trustees responsible for selecting the firm that audits its accounts each year, but it is also responsible for reviewing the finished audit and communicating its results to Investors.

Participating in specialized committees. Each PLGIT Trustee serves on at least one of the following committees in addition to participating in meetings of the entire Board of Trustees:

Audit. Works closely with the Trust’s auditor in the preparation of the annual audit.

Bond Pool. Reviews the mechanics of the Emmaus bond pool to help ensure availability of funds for variable-rate borrowings.

Contracts. Reviews all contracts entered into by PLGIT with its service providers and vendors.

Participants Services. Works with service providers to evaluate and give advice on current and potential services and investment options for PLGIT Investors.

Executive. Oversees the work of all other committees, and is responsible for broad strategic decision making of the Trust.

Provide input on products and services. Because PLGIT Trustees represent a variety of sizes and types of municipalities and schools, they offer input on new programs and services that will have the most usefulness for the greatest number of Investors, such as the PLGIT-CD Purchase Program.

All of these responsibilities come under the umbrella of the Board’s duty to ensure that investments remain consistent with the policies of the Trust. Trustees serve as the eyes and ears of the municipalities and schools they represent, and serve as advocates for those entities as well as for the Trust.

For more information about the work of PLGIT’s Board of Trustees, contact your PLGIT representative, or visit www.plgit.com. □



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Important Disclosure Information

This information is for institutional investor use only, not for further distribution to retail investors, and does not represent an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy or sell any fund or other security. Investors should consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses before investing in any of the Trust's portfolios. This and other information about the Trust's portfolios is available in the current Information Statement, which should be read carefully before investing. A copy of the Information Statement may be obtained by calling 1-800-572-1472 or is available on the Trust's website at www.plgit.com. While the PLGIT and PLGIT/PRIME portfolios seek to maintain a stable net asset value of \$1.00 per share and the PLGIT/TERM portfolio seeks to achieve a net asset value of \$1.00 per share at its stated maturity, it is possible to lose money investing in the Trust. An investment in the Trust is not insured or guaranteed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or any other government agency. Shares of the Trust's portfolios are distributed by PFM Fund Distributors, Inc., member Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (FINRA) (www.finra.org) and Securities Investor Protection Corporation (SIPC) (www.sipc.org). PFM Fund Distributors, Inc. is an affiliate of PFM Asset Management LLC.



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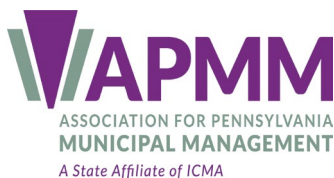
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APMM President's Message



[AMANDA SEROCK](#)
[MANAGER](#)
[CONCORD TOWNSHIP](#)



[APMM.net](#)

Greetings APMM Members!

The end of the year is here, and while I am still figuring out how it's already December, I want to encourage all of you to take time now to reflect on the many accomplishments your municipal teams have made and to celebrate those achievements. It is so important for all of us to slow down this time of year and be grateful for the opportunity to work in this amazing career where we truly get to make a positive difference in the everyday lives of people (whether they like us or not – LOL!). It's also the perfect time to revise those to-do lists and get excited for the possibilities that the New Year brings!

In 2024, the APMM Executive Committee will continue to tackle our to-do lists to enhance our organization, and we have our first meeting planned for January 10th. The agenda includes the 2024 budget, a new LinkedIn Account for membership, a Membership Committee data update, Professional Development updates on 2024 programming, a new marketing plan draft from our Promotions Committee, updates on the May [APMM Conference](#), and updates on the ICMA Pittsburgh Conference in the fall. Our organization has a lot of new and exciting things happening and it has been great working with our committees and The League staff to put our plans into motion. I can't wait to engage our membership in new ways in 2024!

This February you must join us for our popular Executive Development Conference in Bedford Springs! Conference registration as well as room reservation information are already up on the [APMM website](#). The programming this year is top-notch, and you won't want to miss it! The conference leadership sessions include discussions on A.I., professional resilience, our popular book series with the author presenting, a new type of safety for managers to think about at work, and more!

If you have any new ideas or would like to be more involved with our organization, please reach out to me anytime. I am really excited about the future of our organization and all the great things to come in 2024!

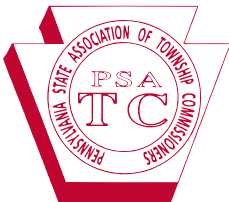
Wishing everyone a safe, happy & healthy holiday season!

Amanda Serock

PSATC President's Message



JOHN J. JABLOWSKI, JR.
COUNCILMEMBER
WILKES-BARRE TOWNSHIP



[PML.org/PSATC](https://www.pml.org/PSATC)

Dear Commissioners,

As we approach the 100th Anniversary of the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners (PSATC) in 2025, our organization continues to evolve.

With our common mission to build stronger more vibrant communities, the Executive Committee under the leadership of President Sam Juliano recently concluded a member engagement survey. This effort provided an opportunity for members to express thoughts and opinions on the various initiatives undertaken by PSATC as well as how we can chart the direction for our 2nd Century!

While legislative advocacy continues to be a focus, the survey helps the PSATC Executive Committee plan and implement strategies to engage our members in other critical areas and bring value to Pennsylvania Townships of the First Class.

See a small excerpt of the survey results on the next page, and also please read through the full results on the PSATC section of The League [website](#) for details. There will be even more exciting news on our soon to be launched website, along with engagement opportunities on both the regional and state levels.

On behalf of the entire Executive Committee, we thank those that participated in the survey and respectfully ask that you join us in becoming an even more engaged part of the PSATC family!

Together, we are "Empowering First Class Leadership" across Pennsylvania.

Kind regards,

John J. Jablowski, Jr.

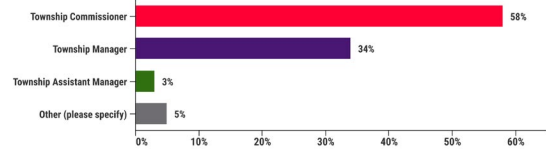
John J. Jablowski, Jr.

2023 PSATC Membership Engagement Survey Findings

OUR METHODOLOGY

- Communication Solutions held the Leadership Team Kickoff Meeting to define PSATC's vision and discuss survey priorities
- Electronic survey administered between July 12 – July 26
- Survey promoted via Constant Contact, emails, phone calls, outreach from Executive Committee
- 237 email opens through Constant Contact
 - 99 survey participants
 - 42% participation

What role best describes you?



Other: Admin assistant/secretary, solicitor

What challenges or issues keep first class townships up at night? (OPEN ENDED)

53 responses

- 23 – Finding the money for unfunded mandates
- 20 – Recruitment & retention (police and firefighters mentioned)
- 9 – Public safety
- 7 – Stormwater management
- 6 – Township planning, communication and engagement
- 3 – Taxation

Standout Open-Ended Feedback

DATA WORTH NOTING

- 52% said lack of awareness/knowledge of PSATC and its benefits prevent others from getting involved
- 45% said more townships would join if PSATC offered training, education, and more valuable information to first class townships
- 50% seek more educational value from your annual conference (Better educational classes, legislative updates, first class township success stories, interactive sessions/workshops)
- 32 respondents provided contact info so they can participate in the branding visioning session

ISSUE #1 – Lack of Awareness RE: PSATC Actions & Benefits

- Although the majority of survey participants are aware of PSATC, they lack awareness of one key initiative PSATC has been involved in:
 - Updating of the First Class Township Code
- Strong member benefits also suffering from lack of awareness seem to be strong resources for first class townships. Yet respondents did not know they were available through PSATC. They include:
 - Participation in Association's Legal Defense Fund
 - Access to qualified secretariat staff for legislative research information
 - Statewide PSATC Directory listed elected and appointed officials
 - Legislative Inquiry Service

A communication plan can increase awareness regarding existing and new member benefits.

ISSUE #2 – Desire for Education & Training Distinct to First Class Township Needs

Survey data overwhelmingly supported the need for educational programming that addresses the distinct needs of first class townships. **The fact that the majority of respondents get their training from workshops, meetings and conferences opens the door to how PSATC should position itself.**

While all proposed topics scored high, the most in-demand educational topics included:

- Governance training for new commissioners
- How to access grants
- Firefighter recruitment and retention

From the open-ended section of the survey, it appears that any topics focused on funding state or federal mandates would also be of great interest.

Educational offerings should be available throughout the year (as a member benefit) as well as during the annual conference.

ISSUE #3 – Townships want more consistent communication from PSATC

Both the quantitative questions and the open-ended portions of this survey pointed to the fact that respondents want PSATC to be more consistent and purposeful with its communication.

They seek information on legislation, member benefits, PSATC news updates, and township success stories.

Proposed communication vehicles which garnered the most favorable responses are as follows:

- Email updates on legislation specific to first class townships
- Quarterly e-newsletter from PSATC to first class townships on its activities, offerings and best practices.
- Members Only Portal for access to resources (which would be accessible on PSATC stand alone website)

A comprehensive communication program should be implemented for PSATC.

Pathway to Building an Engaged & Informed Membership...

- Visioning Session with 30+ respondents that want to be involved with brainstorming and branding via August visioning sessions.
- Finalizing branding and PSATC benefits/offerings
- Planning & coordination of up to 6 PSATC educational webinars per year
- PSATC website development & ongoing updates
- Quarterly e-newsletter to ALL First Class townships
- Social media and traditional media content creation
- First Class Township Award launch

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