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Municipal Reporter



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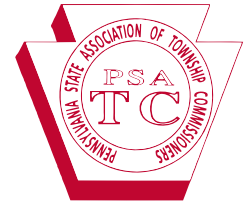
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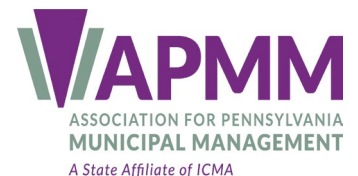
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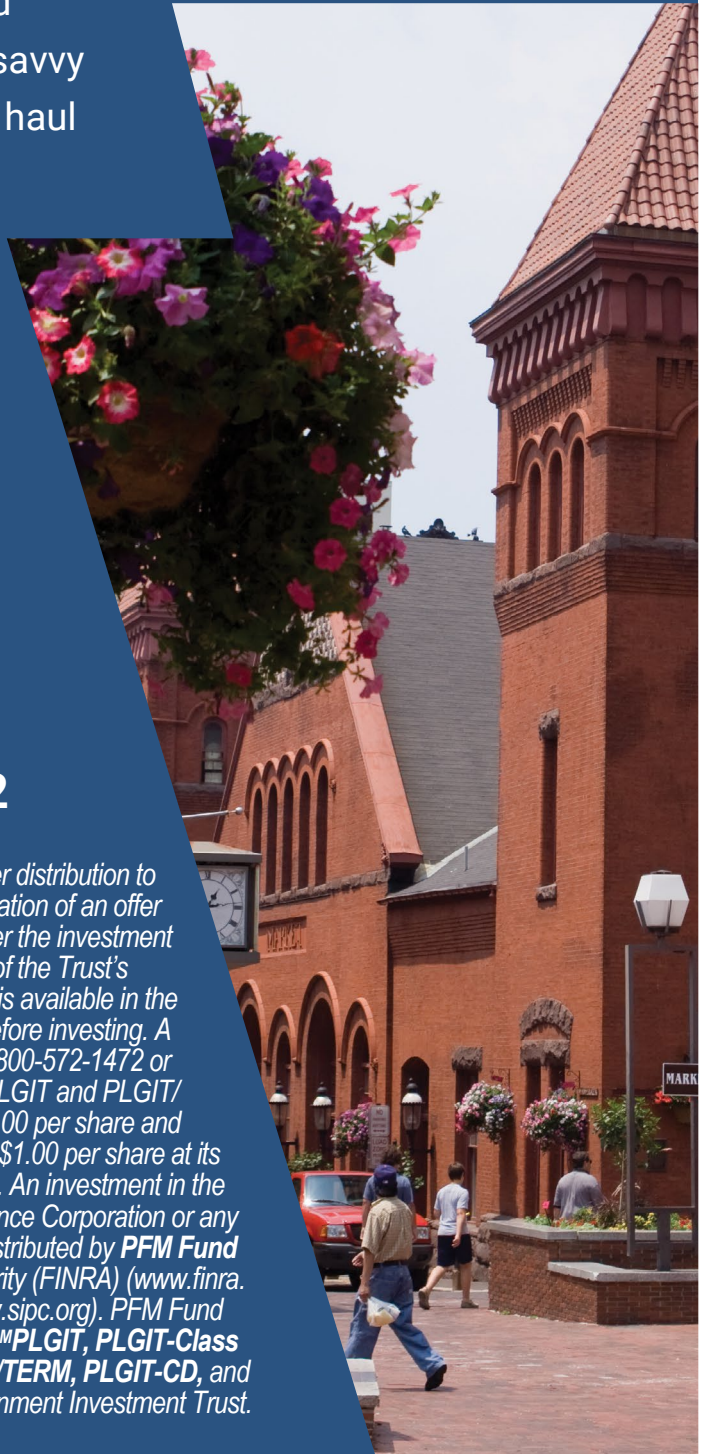
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Our Mission

The Pennsylvania Municipal League strengthens and empowers effective local government through advocacy, education, and support for our members.

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

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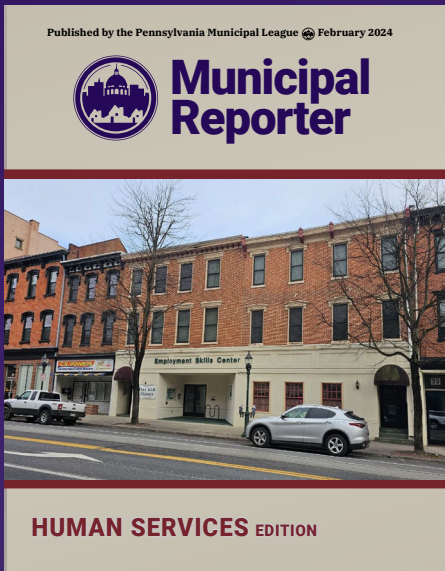
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FEBRUARY 2024 | HUMAN SERVICES

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The League President's Message



DOUGLAS BAKER
MAYOR
CITY OF FRANKLIN



The field of Human Services is broadly defined by the National Organization for Human Services "as uniquely approaching the objective of meeting human needs through an interdisciplinary knowledge base, focusing on prevention as well as remediation of problems, and maintaining a commitment to improving the overall quality of life of service populations. The Human Services profession is one which promotes improved service delivery systems by addressing not only the quality of direct services, but also by seeking to improve accessibility, accountability, and coordination among professionals and agencies in service delivery."

Reflecting on my years as a public servant, I can easily recall many occasions when it was necessary to coordinate with the folks from Human Services. I believe that the role of local government in general is to create an environment where people can flourish as a community and the specialists from Human Services address improving people's lives on a more individual level. I have always appreciated their help when it was needed, and I hope you find the Human Services edition of the Municipal Reporter equally useful.

As we settle into 2024, I'm pleased to see [The League's 2024-2026 Strategic Plan](#) has been completed and is available on our website. The revised mission statement is outstanding: "The Pennsylvania Municipal League strengthens and empowers effective local government through advocacy, education, and support for our members."

Looking ahead to the upcoming months it would be impossible to ignore the important elections that will be occurring this year and the challenges that may come along with them. That being said, I strongly encourage all of us as municipal leaders to review and promote our [Civility Campaign](#) and review and repeat the Civility Pledge as often as necessary.

"As a public servant, I hereby pledge to work daily to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others – even during disagreements – building bridges to foster relationships and respecting different viewpoints, while finding solutions for the betterment of my municipality."

I also invite you to share the Call to Unite, Keynote Address from the 2023 Municipal Leadership Summit that is available at [Tim Shriver - The Call to Unite | Keynote Session | 2023 Municipal Leadership Summit](#) and to help promote the Dignity Pledge: "As an American who knows and loves my country, I am convinced there is no America without democracy, no democracy without healthy debate, and no healthy debate without dignity; therefore, I pledge to do more to treat others with dignity, not contempt."

I look forward to working with and for you throughout the coming months.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Douglas A. Baker".

Douglas A. Baker
Mayor, City of Franklin

The League Executive Director's Message

This past winter, across the street from The League offices, seeking some limited shelter from the cold, a group of folks began sleeping under the porch of what was once "The Quarter" restaurant. They may have found this spot as Riverfront Park along Front Street was no longer available for a growing contingent of unhoused, encamped along the river.

We reached out to the City of Harrisburg to see what we could do as an organization and as a good neighbor. Mayor Wanda Williams didn't miss a beat. She directed us to Downtown Daily Bread, one half block from where the colorful sleeping bags began appearing on that cold morning and directly across the street from the State Capitol building. Thanks to help from the nearby shelter, the city and the state, including Governor Shapiro opening old state-owned facilities for temporary housing, within a few short days, the folks seeking shelter had a safe place to go for meals, daytime and night shelter, and bathroom/shower facilities. They were offered the opportunity to connect with any needed services.

Our Deputy Executive Director of Operations, Abe Amorós, reached out to Brad Gebhart from Downtown Daily Bread and invited him to speak with our staff to learn more about the good work being performed every day and how we might help. In addition, you can read more about the Downtown Daily Bread on [page 18](#) in an article provided by Brad.

Brad spoke with our entire staff recently and shared a list of needed items for the shelter. Coats, hats and gloves, personal care items, bedding items, backpacks, and more are needed. Of course, donations always help as breakfast and lunch are served daily. One of our newest staff members, Training & Professional Development Representative Melinda Schmitz, a Harrisburg resident, offered to help organize a crocheting/knitting group here at The League to handmake items for the shelter. Her idea has touched numerous hearts, and we look forward to seeing the handcrafted items they produce. We are planning to volunteer at the shelter and offer anything we can to support their good work.

Although our efforts here in our neighborhood will not solve the complicated challenge of people needing help, housing and services, it's a step in the right direction.

As municipal leaders, you hold a special place of responsibility for our communities and all the people who live in them. Although you don't necessarily provide direct human service programs as staffed and delivered by our counties, you do help people by connecting them with an array of churches, non-profits and other governmental entities that form a web of services intended to help people. We all know that this is certainly not enough to meet the growing demands of human needs in our communities, large and small. We know the economic pressures of a transforming workplace and workforce are impacted. We know that housing has become a major challenge for so many. We know we must be creative at the local level to support people and help them connect with what they need. Councilmember Frank Pintabone is one such example in Easton. He's pushing for a grocery store in his neighborhood and has provided an article on [page 14](#) on how an inspiring partnership between Shiloh Church, Northampton County and The City of Easton is addressing homelessness in Easton.

This issue of the Municipal Reporter focuses on Human Services. Please keep sharing your good work from your community as together, we look beyond stereotypes and lend a helping hand.

Sincerely,



John S. Brenner



JOHN BRENNER



Executive Director's Video Report





Mark Your Calendar



42nd Annual PELRAS Conference

March 13 - 15

Penn Stater Hotel and Conference Center, State College

League Board of Directors Meeting

March 28

King Mansion, Harrisburg

League Northcentral District Meeting

April 3

Open Discourse Coalition Building, Lewisburg

League Northwest District Meeting

April 4

Lakeside Beach Restaurant, Edinboro

League Northeast District Meeting

April 11

The Mary Stegmaier Mansion, Wilkes-Barre

League Southwest District Meeting #1

April 24

Knead Community Cafe, New Kensington

League Southwest District Meeting #2

April 25

Washington & Jefferson College, Washington

League Southcentral District Meeting

May 1

Harrisburg University

League Southeast District Meeting

May 2

Northampton Valley Country Club, Richboro

APMM 2024 Annual Conference

May 20 - 22

Wind Creek Bethlehem

Newly Elected Officials Virtual Training Series #4, Orientation Program

June 7



[Click here to see upcoming
PATH courses](#)



[Click here to see upcoming
PCCA courses](#)

Inside The League



ABE AMORÓS
DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR -
OPERATIONS

It is hard to believe that spring is just around the corner, but it is!

With The League's fine staff preparing for the PELRAS Conference, we have been operating on all cylinders during this New Year and look forward to continually serving our [144 members](#), which represents an all-time high for us thanks to the herculean efforts of our entire membership team.

The League, led by our Executive Director John Brenner, recently held another productive session to ensure that we are current in our mission and focus on our [2024-2026 Strategic Plan](#). Thanks to 2B Communications, League deputies, directors and managers, we not only laid out our core values as they relate to local governance but also held robust conversations on goals related to: advocacy, training and education, services, member engagement, awareness and organizational excellence. Stay tuned for more as we continue improving upon our plan through careful deliberation and collaboration to bring you the absolute best in services and training opportunities.

In late January, I provided three, well-received trainings at Phoenixville Borough to nearly 80 persons regarding the fundamentals of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) through PennPRIME. Too often, leaders and decision makers are not fully aware of DEIB and fear that it deals with either "critical race theory" or that the trainer's intent is to "guilt" others for their biases. The purpose of this valuable training is to explore ways to maximize your workforce while being fully aware of the many differences that make your constituents and community vibrant. If your municipality is interested in receiving this training, please be sure to contact Elizabeth Henry, our Trusts Member Services Manager at ehenry@pml.org or by calling our office at: 717-236-9469. DEIB work is more important than ever and continues evolving as it receives more attention in the way of providing equity and maximizing our best resources: people.

Coming on the heels of several successful training sessions for newly elected officials, The League continues its collaboration with Penn State on the creation of a local government institute whose mission would be to provide basic training for all elected officials on the fundamentals of budgeting, ethics, running a successful meeting, Pennsylvania's Sunshine Act and other important matters. John Brenner and I met with Montana State University, the University of Georgia, and the Maryland Municipal League already to learn about best practices that have greatly benefitted their constituency groups.

Lastly, remember to share any success stories that you have within your communities by contacting Debbie Bitting, our Director of Communications, at dbitting@pml.org. If you have an interesting project, a success story resulting from the use of American Rescue Plan dollars or want to boast about any recent accolades within your municipality, please reach out.

We are here for you!

From Inside The League,

Abe Amorós

Abe Amorós

Q&A with League Leader

Christopher Christman
Manager
Derry Township
Director-at-Large



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: Christopher, thank you for your service as Manager of Derry Township. How did you get involved in local government?

I had always been interested in public service throughout my life whether that was through my journey in Scouting as a teenager to becoming a municipal manager as an adult. In 2024, I can reflect over the last 25 years and how choosing this career path has been most rewarding to me, both personally and professionally. It began for me, while attending graduate school at Lehigh University in 1999, with an opportunity landing in front of me to join the staff in the Lehigh County Board of Commissioners Office in Allentown. Those first eight years, serving as Deputy Clerk to Board, reaffirmed my belief that I should be following a path in Public Service. As it does for all of us, careers evolve over time and mine was no different. In the intervening seventeen years, I had many opportunities to advance in local government moving from County Government to municipal management serving in various roles as an Assistant Township Manager in Limerick Township, Montgomery County to several managerial roles taking me from Bucks County to the Lehigh Valley, and to my current position as Township Manager here in Derry Township, Dauphin County. Each of those stops along the way helped to shape the type of manager I would ultimately become and for those experiences, I am grateful.

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

One of the most powerful leadership lessons I have learned throughout my career is the importance of communication. Learning to listen and communicate effectively, in my opinion, represents about 95% of this job. Whether you are communicating with your elected officials, your staff, or the public you serve, each audience deserves your best. Listening, learning, and communicating are the three most important functions of a local leader – appointed or elected.

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

Consistently throughout the last 25 years, the best parts of my job have been helping the many elected officials I've served make good public policy decisions. Giving them the tools to make good decisions and knowing that I had a part in that process has been most rewarding.

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

As a municipal manager, some of the greatest challenges come from evaluating the unique needs of the communities we serve. Finding the right blend of good public policy decisions, balancing budgetary requirements, and helping to guide elected officials even when some or all of these things are at odds with each other which can be most challenging.

Q: Thank you for serving on The League Board as a Director-at-Large. How has your involvement with The League helped you and your community?

Serving on The League Board has been a very rewarding experience. Primarily, it gives me an opportunity to hear the needs of different communities and how The League can help address those needs through our advocacy efforts. Serving with both elected and appointed officials from across our commonwealth has helped me become a better manager here in Derry Township by bringing that broader perspective back to local issues.

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

Working in municipal government can be one of the most challenging, as well as most rewarding careers, because you can put your fingerprint on the public policy needs of the community you serve. Seeking internships while pursuing a college degree (undergraduate or graduate) is a great way to bridge the gap between the theory

of the classroom and the real-world application of where politics intertwines with actual public policy delivery.

Q: As a proud Manager, what would you say are some of Derry Township's greatest attributes?

Derry Township is a great place. Most of us know Derry Township as Hershey, Pennsylvania, because of Hershey's Chocolate, Hersheypark, the Penn State Hershey Medical Center and the Milton Hershey School. But for the folks who call Derry Township home, we're a robust community of about 28,000 people that has a multitude of traditional public services, but also has a new state-of-the-art Community Center, an expansive park system and a public library. We're also host to 3.6 million visitors each year, which include families, conference attendees and sometimes presidential candidates. We find ourselves uniquely positioned in the center of the commonwealth giving us access to Philadelphia and Pittsburgh easily. Certainly, there is always something for everyone in Hershey!

Q: What programs or practices has Derry Township implemented to address this edition's topic of "Human Services?"

Derry Township has been partnering with the Dauphin County Department of Human Services to provide a ride along mental health co-responder with our police officers as they encounter situations that would require a special level of expertise. In most of these cases, the advocate can evaluate the situation firsthand and connect the individual(s) directly with the appropriate Human Services Agency they need to deescalate the situation. It has been very advantageous to us and the Borough of Hummelstown as the advocate services are shared between both municipalities.



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Human Services Articles . . .

Shiloh Church Provides Hope and Hygiene to Easton Pennsylvania's Homeless

A Benevolent Partnership Addresses the Issue of Homelessness in Easton

BY COUNCILMAN FRANK PINTABONE, CITY OF EASTON



In the heart of East Pennsylvania, homelessness is a challenge similar to what many municipalities face across the country. However, an inspiring partnership between Shiloh Church, Northampton County and the City of Easton is striving to make a difference. Their combined efforts have resulted in the provision of essential facilities and resources, bringing hope and hygiene to the homeless population of the city.

Shiloh Church, known for its philanthropic endeavors, has emerged as a steadfast partner of the City of Easton in tackling homelessness. Recognizing

the urgent need for hygiene facilities, the church leased a trailer equipped with three individual shower and sink units. This initiative took shape on church property, offering a safe and private space for the city's houseless individuals.

Committed volunteers from Shiloh Church and the local community came together to extend their support beyond just the provision of showers. They collected shampoos, toiletries, socks, shoes and clothes, ensuring that those who visited the shower facility would have access to more than just basic hygiene necessities. The act of giving new clothes

and sneakers uplifted spirits and provided a sense of dignity to those in need.

The project, running every Tuesday and Thursday, has become an integral part of the City of Easton's initiatives to address homelessness. With a regular schedule in place, individuals experiencing homelessness are given a reliable opportunity to freshen up, brush their teeth, change into clean clothes and even acquire new clothing items. This endeavor not only serves their immediate hygiene needs but also restores a sense of normalcy and self-esteem.



The successful collaboration between Shiloh Church and the City of Easton and Northampton County serves as an inspiration for similar initiatives nationwide. By addressing homelessness through practical solutions and compassionate outreach, a brighter future can be forged for those who need it most.

As we look ahead, it is crucial that such partnerships continue to grow, addressing



The impact of Shiloh Church’s initiative is felt deeply throughout the community, as both volunteers and recipients express their gratitude. Bob Thompson, a regular volunteer, shares, “Being part of this project has truly opened my eyes. The simple act of offering a shower and clean clothes has the power to uplift someone’s outlook on life.” Such sentiments are echoed by the members of the homeless population who greatly appreciate the support received from both the church and the City of Easton.

the root causes of homelessness and empowering individuals to regain stability in their lives. Shiloh Church and the City of Easton along with Northampton County have demonstrated the tremendous impact that a dedicated

community can make. Let us all join hands and ensure that hope and hygiene are never out of reach for anyone struggling with homelessness. □

This partnership not only offers vital amenities but also fosters a sense of compassion and understanding among local residents. People from various walks of life are now connecting on a deeper level, breaking the barriers that often separate the homeless from the housed. It is a reminder that together, we can create a community where everyone feels valued and supported.



Basement Backup Problem Solved by Caring HomeServe Customer Agents

BY SERVICE LINE WARRANTY PROGRAM | CUSTOMER TESTIMONIALS, NLC SLWP, PENNSYLVANIA

After 40 years in the extermination business, Vincent L. knew good customer service. And when he found himself with a basement full of water while his 88-year-old mother was ill, Vincent needed customer service. “I went into the basement, and it was full of water,” he said. “I tried to clear the drain, but I couldn’t.” If a basement full of water wasn’t stressful enough, Vincent’s mother was scheduled to have surgery as well. “It was rough, was what it was,” he said. It turned out that the water in Vincent’s basement was because of an issue in his neighbor’s home. After his neighbor hired a plumber to address it, the water in Vincent’s basement drained. For a few days, anyway. “A couple days later, there was water in my basement again, but it was not the same problem,” he said.

Vincent had some help, however – he had enrolled in several of HomeServe’s emergency home repair plans, including water service line, sewer service line and interior

plumbing and drainage, through the City of Reading, Pennsylvania’s program with HomeServe’s Service Line Warranties of America. Despite the busy holiday season, HomeServe’s customer experience agents hustled to dispatch a contractor to assess the problem in Vincent’s basement. “I’m retired from the service business and it’s harder now to get people out to your home, and that’s all I was thinking about, but HomeServe did everything they possibly could,” he said. “I’m pretty skeptical, but I could see that they really cared.” “I could see that whoever I spoke to was really trying to get someone out here,” he said, noting that his problem cropped up on a holiday weekend.

His interior drain line was leaking so that everything he put down the drain bubbled back up in his basement. With his mother’s health issues, this just wasn’t something he could wait to address. Vincent was employing a shop vacuum in the battle, but he was losing. “The operations center was

excellent, I felt like they were really concerned about my situation,” he said. “I’ve been in the customer service business for 40 years – I ran an extermination company – and I could tell that (the customer experience agents) really cared.” [Quinns Plumbing, Heating and Cooling Services](#) was dispatched to replace 50 feet of pipe beneath Vincent’s home, and he saved \$2,316 on the repair. □



American Rescue Plan Funding

BY ABE AMORÓS, DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - OPERATIONS, THE LEAGUE

While COVID-19 remains in the rearview mirror for most Pennsylvanians, municipalities are still aware of the economic impact it has had on its bottom line in many ways.

As a result of the devastating economic impact that COVID-19 created, Congress approved the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. Under this legislation, the federal government authorized \$1.9 trillion for state and local governments, individuals and businesses for economic recovery and public health. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania received \$6.15 billion in funding. Eligible uses include responding to the public health emergency; negative economic impacts; loans and grants to mitigate financial hardships; paying premium wages for essential workers; fixing critical infrastructure such as streets, roads and sidewalks; lost revenue replacement; and investments in water, sewer and broadband, to name a few.

Municipalities were awarded funds according to population and have until the end of 2024 to submit their plans to the federal government through a resolution approved by their respective governing bodies such as city councils,

borough councils or township commissions. Funds must be expended by the end of 2026 and require reporting periods to ensure accountability and transparency. Municipalities held public hearings and gave residents opportunities to weigh in on priorities with the ability to influence which projects needed more attention than others.

Examples of allocations include \$60 million for the City of Reading which will use its allocation for major projects such as: \$10 million for the city's capital improvements, \$5 million for a fire station, \$5 million to non-profit organizations, and \$6 million to be equally divided among Alvernia University, Albright College, and Reading Area Community College.

The City of Lancaster will use its \$39.5 million allocation for initiatives and nonprofit organizations that include: \$7.5 million for affordable housing; \$1 million for two initiatives spearheaded by the Spanish American Civic Association; \$750,000 to the Lancaster Recreation Commission for facility renovations; \$600,000 to the Boys and Girls Club of Lancaster for improvements

to their clubhouse spaces; and \$500,000 for the Lancaster Public Library for new construction.

Cranberry Township in Butler County received more than \$3.3 million in ARPA funds to assist with water and sewer projects, including \$1.75 million for an upgrade to the Brush Creek Treatment Plant wastewater facility.

If your municipality has not already held a public hearing nor approved legislation authorizing expenditure of these funds, there's still time. The final deadline to submit an approved plan is December 31st. While most municipalities have already planned what their funds will be used for, providing transparency is of utmost importance to constituents. ARPA funds not only provide necessary capital for much-needed projects, but also instill confidence in elected officials who understand the importance of this, hopefully, one-time infusion that will pave the way for future successes. □

Downtown Daily Bread Has Been Providing Services to Clients for Over 40 Years and We Are a Leader in the Homelessness and Hunger Movement

BY BRADLEY GEBHART, DOWNTOWN DAILY BREAD



Downtown Daily Bread serves both as a safety net and as a steppingstone for our clients. As a safety net, we provide day and night shelter, a full-service kitchen providing breakfast and lunch, showers, mental health counseling and referrals, on-site medical care (UPMC), mail room, outreach, and support of the area encampments. Under the leadership of Corrie Lingenfelter, Executive Director, Downtown Daily Bread is implementing a new initiative we are calling “DDB2.0:Moving Forward.” Our objective with this program is to assist our clients in moving forward in their lives. We want to give people the tools to empower their own path out of homelessness. This new approach



changes the way we perceive homelessness and therefore the way we help end homelessness; one life at a time. We understand the social factors that create a dependence on our services and prevent our clients from reaching their full potential. Our project will address these issues head on. Downtown Daily Bread began as a ministry of the Pine Street Presbyterian Church. The mission of Downtown Daily Bread is to confront hunger and homelessness by offering daily food and shelter, delivering services, fostering community, and inspiring hope. Today we have our unique non-profit status and operate under our own 501 C (3).

The goal of DDB2.0:MovingForward is to assist each individual in achieving their self-defined level of success. Downtown Daily Bread will provide assistance, resources, guidance, compassion, and one-on-one help to each individual who comes through our doors for meals or shelter, in their unique environment and circumstance, so they can lead the life they

would choose to live. This means extending our services to include smoking cessation, drug treatment and recovery, ESL classes, GED assistance, and whatever else they need, within our purview.

DDB2.0:MovingForward is not about the numbers of individuals who use our facility, but the numbers that won't after we provide the assistance they need. We will continue the great work we do but add to it. Therefore, we will work towards offering additional services, at no charge, to our clients.

For those needing assistance recovering from opioid or drug addiction we are working with Pyramid Healthcare, Pro A, and the Centers of Excellence. We provide in-house STD/HIV/HepC testing, treatment, and counseling; smoking/vapor/chewing quit programs, free legal aid, and haircuts.

For those clients with mental disorders, DDB2.0:MovingForward will provide additional mental

Breakfast and Lunch
Balanced, Nutritious Meals

Clothing and More
Socks, undergear, coats, shoes, luggage, sleeping bags, shirts, pants, dental care and much more.

Showers



Day Shelter
(air-conditioned) beds, cots, phone charging, computers, and bathrooms

Men's Night Shelter
(heated)
(December – April)

Mail
We provide a location where mail and packages can be delivered.

housing, but with the rising costs of daily life, cannot afford the extra meal they need and come to us for delicious food and nourishment. We welcomed 32,000 drop-in center guests, 1,250 of whom were brand new. This is in addition to the countless clients seen by our outreach team and UPMC Street Medicine providers at the encampments.

To reach out to Downtown Daily Bread, contact Bradley Gebhart at bgebhart@downtowndailybread.org and visit us on our website at www.downtowndailybread.org. □

health counselling and offer individualized therapeutic services in-house. Many of our clients have cognitive disabilities. To aid these individuals we will provide basic educational classes, ESL instruction and GED preparation classes.

clients in-house with nurses and physicians providing care.

In 2023, Downtown Daily Bread served 70,000 meals. Close to 50% of our diners have some form of

We are working with Bro 2 Go, and Jones Resources LLC, organizations whose mission is to empower, equip, and motivate men and women who are ex-offenders. We want to provide this population with the tools to succeed post imprisonment, so they do not become homeless or go back to prison. These groups meet with our clients on a regular basis throughout the week.

We have and continue to reach out to and provide for our veterans. We are creating and working with providers that serve the unique needs of veterans.

We work with UPS, which picks up our clients, takes them to their UPS warehouse, gives them work, pays them, and brings them back to DDB. UPMC for You, Highmark Wholecare and Capital Blue are on-site helping to enroll patients into their insurance coverages. UPMC Street Medicine works with

WINTER WISHLIST

Winter Coats
Hats, Scarves & Gloves
Therman Socks
Men/Women's Underwear
Sweaters and Hoodies

Personal Care Items

Coffee
Tea
Hot Chocolate
Juice Boxes
Thermoses

Toothbrush
Toothpaste
Soap & Shampoo
Razors
Shaving Cream
Sanitary Napkins
Tampons
Deodorant

Monetary donations

Sheets,
Pillowcases
Pillows
Towels
Washclothes
Mattress Covers

For more details & to order go to:
<https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/32HE2Z3Z5LHME>

THANK YOU

Providing Children with Nutritious Meals During the Summer Months



Although most of us delight in the idea of summer in the midst of winter, those summer months can be a very trying time for families that rely on free or reduced-price meals during the school year.

During the school year, many students receive healthy and nutritious school meals for little or no charge. It is vital to ensure that children in the commonwealth have continuous access to the nutrition needed to support their growth, health, and academic success when school is not in session. Having healthy nutritious meals should not end when school does but many households struggle over the summer months to provide children with the nutritious food they need over the summer months.

The United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) summer meals program bridges the gap between school years by providing children in lower income areas with the fuel they need to play and grow during the summer months and return to school ready to learn. These programs are federally funded and administered in Pennsylvania at the state level by the Pennsylvania Department of Education's (PDE) Division of Food and Nutrition (DFN).

Summer meal program sponsors can be School Food Authorities (SFAs) and other non-profit

Community Organizations (COs), including but not limited to local governments, churches, YMCAs, libraries etc. A Sponsor is the organization that is responsible for administering the Summer Meal Program. Program sponsors are reimbursed at an established per meal rate to provide up to two meals or snacks per day to children at meal sites. A meal site is a physical location where meals are served, and sponsors may serve meals at one or more sites. Sites can be schools, camps, churches, community centers, housing complexes, libraries, migrant centers, parks, playgrounds, pools, and other public sites where children gather. Meals have been traditionally served in a congregate setting, where children eat at the site. USDA has implemented a permanent provision to allow non-congregate meal service, where meals are consumed off site, in eligible rural areas.

Typically, summer meals are required to be served in a congregate setting on-site. PDE is excited to announce an innovative change to the summer meals programs this year. With implementation of USDA's Rural Non-Congregate meal service option, Pennsylvania is able to expand the network of providers and food resources available to children during the summer. The Rural Non-Congregate meal

service option allows children in areas designated as rural and where no congregate meals service is available to receive multiple days of meals via grab-n-go, curbside pick-up, drive-thru pick-up, mobile delivery routes, and home delivery. This will make meals attainable to children formerly unreachable during the summer months due to issues related to distance and the inability for children to get to meal sites.

Sponsors and sites are needed to make this a reality. SFAs and COs are encouraged to consider implementing the Summer Meal Program to provide children critical access to meals during the summer months by becoming a summer program sponsor or hosting a meal service site (administered by an existing sponsor). If the SFA or CO is in a lower income, rural area, consider the possibility of operating a non-congregate site to reach a maximum number of eligible children. To see if an address qualifies as lower income or rural you can use the [No Kid Hungry Summer Meals Eligibility Map | Center for Best Practices](#).

For more information on becoming a sponsor or hosting a meal site for the summer, contact PDE, DFN at RA-SFSP@pa.gov, RA-NSLP@pa.gov or 800-331-0129. □

Local Government 101



Practical Ethics & Human Resources for NEOT & HR Best Practices Recap

BY ROSEANN MCGRATH

It was my honor to present the Practical Ethics and Human Resources (HR) topic for Newly Elected Officials Training in January 2024. We thank our elected officials for their dedication to public service but appreciate that they come from varied backgrounds primarily in the private sector which is much different than the public sector. Although their knowledge, skills, abilities and experiences are expansive, we must educate that in the public sector, we are governed by different rules, regulations, federal, state and local laws in union environments that require collective bargaining in accordance with Acts 111 and 195 and all public employees have due process rights.

What is the same for private and public employment are ethics which are rules of conduct or moral principles that guide individual or group behavior. Integrity in public administration is an important condition for the effective functioning of our state, for ensuring public trust in the government, and for creating conditions for sustainable social and economic development. The focus is on awareness of organizational values, guidelines, codes and behaving within those boundaries when faced with

dilemmas in our professional work. Ethics and HR go together because HR professionals are in a strategic position to ensure that our organizations maintain cultures that demand ethical behavior. Ethics training is the critical instrument for building integrity and ensuring quality public governance to prevent corruption, to provide good public service and ensure long-term corporate social responsibility and sustainability. Good governance begins with accountability and data driven decision making. Good leadership means the numbers add up, the vision is clear and you are willing to make tough decisions for the welfare of the community without personal bias.

In the session, we spoke of lessons learned from shocking municipal fraud cases. The main goal must be transparency and accountability, a clear division of responsibilities, along with a process of independent verification, in communities of all sizes. Because of the complexity of public employment, we must ooze transparency and communication at the heart of what we deliver. Our residents want honest, truthful positive relationships with their municipality. Thus, why we must conform to the Sunshine Act and Freedom of Information Act/

Right to Know/Open Records laws. You must have critical policies, to name just a few are Conflict of Interest/Standards of Conduct in accordance with the PA Public Official and Employee Ethics Act, Fraternalization/Personal Relationships/Nepotism, Whistleblower, Harassment/Discrimination with Complaint Procedures (with required training of all elected officials, employees, etc.), EEO/ADA/FMLA, Drug Free Workplace, Violence Protection, Child Protection Services Law, with **signed** employee receipt acknowledgment forms and a Performance Excellence (Evaluations) program.

It is hard to believe that there are 67 counties, which are in total subdivided into 2,560 municipalities in the state of PA. We are all asked to do more with less and are all dealing with the same challenges. Most of municipal budgets are 'people' costs for healthcare, fringe benefits, pension and collective bargaining which makes human capital just as important, if not more important than financial capital.

It's paramount to have an organizational culture built on trust where your municipal manager unites the elected officials to



have a shared vision, multi-year capital, along with a strategic/operational plan, with two-way ongoing communication, to set mutual goals, priorities and ensure municipal staff are executing collective (not individual) policy while meeting expectations. To this end, it is prudent to hold an annual retreat with elected officials and department heads/key staff to discuss Key Performance Indicators (KPI) and benchmarking. It is best to start with simple to measure performance; to measure impact, you must measure output first.

In January, I was also honored to deliver the first six-hour HR Best Practices Program to discuss how the role of HR has moved from the traditional thinking that 'Personnel' are just paper-pushers doing transactional work, which granted are very important tasks of onboarding new employees, payroll, healthcare, and employee benefit administration, but also transformational work of performance excellence is paramount. Our employees are our most valued asset and most important strength. It takes a Village – Our employees are delivering the services to our constituents who have placed their trust in our communities to be a great place to live, work, and play. At the end of the day, municipal staff are on the front lines, catching the crooks, putting out fires, plowing the streets and executing policies set by the elected officials.

There is a war for good talent. Good municipal managers, senior and key staff are being poached and stolen away. It is imperative to have a plan to develop, attract and retain our human capital by becoming an *Employer of Choice*. You can combat recruitment challenges with workforce/succession planning, managing talent, forecasting risk, and closing skill gaps. Through *Talent Optimization* you can build and maintain a rock star team where you hire the right people with the right skills at the right time while addressing four, if not five, generations in the workplace.

Municipalities must seek to promote a safe work environment, fairness, open communication with compassion, civility, and accountability as well as mutual trust and respect. Municipalities must provide leadership and guidance for creativity and innovation through programs, policies, and practices to facilitate their commitment to excellence, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), quality performance and legal compliance.

Employee Engagement is the Holy Grail! The key to any workplace is *Culture*, which must be built on *Trust* to lead to higher productivity, increased innovation, improved employee engagement and retention. The leadership roadmap is action learning, active listening, and creating one vision to express and support the mission, vision, and values of the organization. A Performance Excellence Program is intended to be an interactive collaborative endeavor to conduct a S.W.O.T. (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, setting mutual SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic Timely) goals that offer appropriate compensation, benefits, with on-going communication, which may mean having difficult conversations and training. Job descriptions must accurately reflect an individual's duties and responsibilities and be used as a tool for recruiting, determining salary ranges and levels or grades, establishing job titles, creating employee's job goals and objectives, and assessing if performance expectations are being met.

We must demand *Performance Excellence* in a coaching culture where inclusion, engagement, motivation, and innovation emerge and intersect. Harassment, discrimination, workplace violence, unconscious biases, sexual misconduct, and workplace bullying cannot be tolerated. *Emotional Intelligence* (EQ) is the ability to understand your own and others' emotions and how they

drive behavior, and then using that knowledge to motivate others. We must provide sound policies with ongoing training, development and safety for self-awareness/self-regulation, motivation, empathy, good interpersonal skills, which through EQ will drive performance excellence.

We must ensure our employees' overall wellness. Unless we fully address mental, physical, and overall well-being, employees will not have the agility, stability, and resiliency to endure economic instability and workplace challenges. Your organization must afford employees a good life/work balance and have wellness programs and incentives, an employee assistance program (EAP).

You must create DEI Initiatives, which is an interactive process to compile and analyze your data. Your workforce should be reflective of your community where you conduct an organizational assessment and align your DEI strategy with your organizational goals, understanding the diversity of the community you serve. When you compile the demographics, you are gathering your workforce analytics, which also commences succession planning and recruitment/retention, and you are conducting an employee lifecycle analysis along with talent diversity. A DEI initiative is built on inclusivity and communication, where everyone is treated with respect, civility, flexibility and agility while we nurture and mentor our employees. We must support our people to allow them to grow and develop while integrating a sound work/life balance. By investing in people, we can ignite their passion, inspire excellence as a resilient progressive change agent while listening with authentic empathy, embracing our differences with sincere belonging, inclusivity and providing servant leadership. □



Are You Prepared For Possible Workers' Compensation Claims As We Enter The New Year?

SUBMITTED BY MARIELLA QUEIPO-COLÓN, PENNPRIME DIRECTOR OF TRUSTS

Everyone hopes that none of their employees will suffer work-related injuries, but being prepared to support your employees helps them recover sooner and return to work sooner.

Preparation starts with a Workers' Compensation Panel. If you have a panel, when was the last time you updated your Workers' Compensation Panel? An up-to-date and well thought out panel is your first step in assisting anyone who suffers a work-related injury. The PA Department of Labor says that a panel should include "at least six health care providers, with no more than four coordinated care organizations and there should be at least three providers who must be physicians. The panel should include geographically accessible provider types used to treat the type of injuries your employees might experience. Each provider's name address, phone number and area of medical specialty must be included on your panel."

Having an up-to-date panel does not guarantee success in rehabilitation unless your employees are all aware of the process. Make sure your employees all know the steps if they are suffering a work-related injury. A Workers' Compensation Employee Notification form should have been signed at the time of hire and a form should be signed when someone is injured to make sure that the employee understands their rights under the law. This notification should provide clear, written notice of the Workers' Compensation process to the employee and this notification can be included on the posted panel list:

- During the initial ninety (90) days from the date of the first visit for a claim, the employee will have the right to switch from one health care provider on the list to another and that treatment will be paid for by the employer.
- If a designated health care provider (from the panel) refers the employee to another health care provider for treatment who is not on the panel, the employer will pay for treatment rendered by the provider to whom the employee was referred.
- Employees have the right to seek treatment or medical consultation from a non-designated health care provider during the initial ninety (90) day period following that first

visit, but they (the employee) are personally responsible for payment for those services.

- Employees have the right to seek treatment from any health care provider at the expiration of the ninety (90) day period from the date of first visit. Such treatment will be paid for by the employer unless the treatment is found to be unreasonable or unnecessary by a utilization review organization pursuant to the utilization review process contained in the Pennsylvania Workers' Compensation Act.
- The employer will be responsible for the cost of that treatment after the initial ninety (90) day period has ended but only if the employee notifies the employer that they are receiving treatment from a non-designated health care provider and only if that notice is provided within five (5) days after the first visit to that provider.
- If the employee provides notice to employer of treatment by a non-designated provider more than five (5) days after the first visit to that provider, the employer will not be responsible to pay for treatment rendered by that non-designated provider until it receives notification from you that you are receiving such treatment.

The Workers' Compensation Panel list should also be posted in "common" areas that all employees have access to in each of the buildings from which employees operate.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via the information below.

Information such as above is available to all PennPRIME Members. Please contact Mariella Queipo-Colón, Director of Trusts, mcolon@pml.org / 717-236-9469, ext. *324, for additional information. □



2024 – 2026 Strategic Plan



We have set our sights even higher as we look ahead to the next three years.

United to Advance Pennsylvania’s Municipalities

The 2024-2026 Strategic Plan of the Pennsylvania Municipal League aims to be both ambitious and attainable. Rather than acting as an anchor, the plan is designed to function as a guiding rudder, helping us navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities in the coming years.

Our most recent strategic plan was instrumental in allowing us to grow and strengthen our offerings for municipal leaders and become a more effective organization. Building upon the success of that plan, we again engaged 2B Communications & Strategy Group to help us create a data-informed and actionable plan that would serve as a source of inspiration and motivation for our members and staff.

We have set our sights even higher as we look ahead to the next three years. **Among the many opportunities on the horizon is The League’s 125th anniversary of serving those who serve municipalities in Pennsylvania.** We will mark this milestone in 2025 with a year-long commemoration involving municipal leaders and communities across the commonwealth.

We extend our sincere appreciation to everyone who contributed to the in-depth and insightful research, the reflective analysis, and the creation of our new strategic plan. We are confident its successful implementation will strengthen and empower effective local government and advance our vision of a thriving commonwealth.

Our 2024-2026 Strategic Plan was approved by the League’s Board of Directors on January 10, 2024.



We Listened. We Learned. We Focused.

Developing The League's path forward was an inclusive process that challenged and engaged our Board of Directors, members, and staff.

Our discovery process included:

- Interviews with internal and external stakeholders
- Surveys to gather input from our members, Business Leaders Network, and staff
- Evaluating our member programs and offerings
- Conducting a thorough examination of our organizational performance

Our research affirmed that The League has many strengths from which to build.

We remain uniquely positioned to advocate for and serve Pennsylvania's municipal leaders as they address their communities' increasingly complex needs. We also gained insights on what more we can do to serve elected and appointed municipal leaders who fulfill vital roles in diverse communities across the commonwealth.

The process included a series of collaborative planning sessions, which provided the space for us to understand, debate, and craft our new plan. We agreed that the time was right to review and update The League's mission, vision, and core values to which we are firmly committed.

We have laid the groundwork for future success by formulating a plan that will enable us to sustain strategic focus and adapt to ongoing shifts and changes. It contains fresh mission and vision statements, refined core values, and a new set of goals and strategies that prioritize the needs of elected and appointed municipal leaders and the vitality and well-being of our commonwealth communities.

We are guided by our mission and vision.



Our Mission

The Pennsylvania Municipal League strengthens and empowers effective local government through advocacy, education, and support for our members.



Our Vision

A commonwealth thriving with vibrant, resilient communities.



The following core values serve as our compass.

▶ **Our Core Values**

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

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

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging: 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 proactively support the ongoing development of our local leaders as they are vital to the commonwealth's success and the well-being of Pennsylvanians.

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

Collaboration: We enhance Pennsylvania's communities by facilitating collaborations 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.

Our 2024-2026 Goals

Six goals convey what we aim to achieve. Five represent focused areas of action, and Organizational Excellence is a foundational goal encompassing several cross-cutting functions that support everything The League does.



ADVOCACY GOAL

Protect and advance the interests of Pennsylvania's municipalities through proactive, bold, and sustained advocacy.



TRAINING & EDUCATION GOAL

Champion excellence in municipal leadership by helping local officials and staff expand their capacity to meet community needs.



SERVICES GOAL

Provide high-quality service programs that help municipalities optimize their operations.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT GOAL

Connect, convene, and engage municipal leaders across the commonwealth.



AWARENESS GOAL

Raise the visibility of Pennsylvania municipalities and serve as an information hub for municipal issues.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE GOAL

Maximize The League's structures, systems, and resources to ensure long-term sustainability.

2024 - 2026 Goals & Strategies



ADVOCACY

Protect and advance the interests of Pennsylvania's municipalities through proactive, bold, and sustained advocacy.

Strategies

- Facilitate increased strategic relationship-building among League members and state decision-makers.
- Elevate the visibility of The League's advocacy efforts and its Legislative Committee.
- Equip League members to serve as effective advocacy liaisons.
- Produce and disseminate periodic briefings on legislative issues to highlight the connection between state action and municipal impact, including what local officials can do to support League advocacy efforts.
- Develop a new legislative communications tracking system to coordinate advocacy efforts with League members.



TRAINING & EDUCATION

Champion excellence in municipal leadership by helping local officials and staff expand their capacity to meet community needs.

Strategies

- Deliver best-in-class training programs tailored to meet the diverse needs of elected officials and municipal staff.
- Develop a new, comprehensive timely training certificate program for aspiring and current officials.
- Explore the creation of internship and mentoring programs.



SERVICES

Provide high-quality service programs that help municipalities optimize their operations.

Strategies

- Work with municipalities to ensure they realize maximum benefit from the services offered (e.g., PELRAS, Sustainable PA, Municipal Utility Alliance, GrantFinder).
- Identify and implement new programs to enable municipalities to save money and secure funding and other resources.
- Pursue offerings that address municipalities' employee recruitment and hiring needs.



MEMBER ENGAGEMENT

Connect, convene, and engage municipal leaders across the commonwealth.

Strategies

- Strategically grow membership by implementing a comprehensive recruitment strategy.
- Update member onboarding, engagement, and retention approaches to deepen involvement within member municipalities.
- Consistently assess member needs and adapt offerings to ensure relevance.
- Evaluate and update district leadership structures, geographic regions, and programming to heighten engagement.
- Provide outstanding value to the Business Leaders Network.
- Foster meaningful connections among members through playground builds and other experiential programming.



AWARENESS

Raise the visibility of Pennsylvania municipalities and serve as an information hub for municipal issues.

Strategies

- Shine the light on outstanding municipal leadership, best practices, and innovations.
- Focus The League's branding and messaging to enhance cohesion and amplify its impact.
- Sustain optimal communication practices, including strengthening The League's social media presence.



ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Maximize The League's structures, systems, and resources to ensure long-term sustainability.

Strategies

- Review and update the bylaws to ensure they are streamlined, modernized, and informed by member input.
- Evolve the technology infrastructure to meet ongoing needs and enable targeted member communications.
- Maintain strong financial and operational performance, policies, and practices.
- Align resources to ensure the successful implementation of the strategic plan.
- Cultivate a positive work environment while consistently attracting and retaining highly qualified staff.

IGS | Handyman Program

1 What is the IGS Assistance Program?

The IGS Handyman Program is an optional service available through a partnership between the municipality and Integral Group Solution. It offers homeowners in a number of covered handyman jobs all performed by a network of local & licensed contractors.

2 How does the IGS Handyman Program benefit the community?

The IGS Handyman Program benefits the community by providing residents with a resource for reliable handyman services. This helps improve the overall condition of homes in the municipality and contributes to the well-being of the community, all while being a cost-free initiative for the city and its residents.

3 How can residents enroll in the IGS Handyman Program?

Homeowners can enroll by direct mail reponse, visiting the IGS website, or by calling their dedicated enrollment team.

4 Who qualifies for the program?

The IGS Handyman Program is available to all homeowners in the municipality. There are no specific qualifications or eligibility criteria, making it accessible to a wide range of residents.

5 How are the handymen in the program selected?

Handymen participating in the program are carefully selected through a vetting process to ensure their reliability and skillset. Integral Group Solution collaborates with experienced professionals to provide high-quality services to enrolled residents.



www.IGScare.com



1(800) 750-8374



Handyman Products

Homeowners can enroll in any of the one products below. All handyman products come with "Call an Expert" and Emergency Locksmith coverage.

INTEGRAL HANDYMAN \$7.99/month	ENHANCED HANDYMAN \$9.99/month	PREMIER HANDYMAN \$12.99/month
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers 3 jobs, annually 2 hours per job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers 3 jobs, annually 2 hours per job 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Covers 3 jobs, annually 3 hours per job
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plumbing Fixture Installations & Repairs Interior Painting Gutter Maintenance Curtain & Blinds Installations DIY Projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plumbing Fixture Installations & Repairs Interior Painting Gutter Maintenance Curtain & Blinds Installations DIY Projects Emergency Glass Repairs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plumbing Fixture Installations & Repairs Interior Painting Gutter Maintenance Curtain & Blinds Installations DIY Projects Emergency Glass Repairs Drywall Installations Wall Mounting

Community Outreach

Our goal is a strategy that best meets the needs of your community and residents, at no cost to the city.

TRANSPARENCY MATTERS

We know a focused, partner-centric approach means strengthened relationships, happy-customers, and longevity in our partnership together.

HOW?

1. Clearly shows the partnership (not just a city logo)
2. Materials come from IGS, without confusion on who administers the program
3. Focus on education & value, not fear
4. Aligns with tone a municipality would have towards it's residents
5. Easy-to-locate call center and website information
6. A 24/7 team of motivated Customer Service Agents

Transparent

No room for confusion on who the program is coming from,

Clear & Simple

Easy to digest information on the program and services

Multi-Pronged

An understanding that one approach is not the best or only approach.



Legislative Status Report STATE



PREPARED BY AMY STURGES, LEAGUE DEPUTY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR – ADVOCACY – asturges@pml.org
KAITLIN ERRICKSON, GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS MANAGER – kerrickson@pml.org
JOSEPH D'AMBROSIO, LEAGUE ADVOCACY INTERN

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

legis.state.pa.us

Legislative Update

Governor Shapiro's 2024/2025 Budget Address

On February 6, Governor Josh Shapiro gave his second budget address to a joint session of the legislature. Shapiro's proposed 2024/2025 budget is \$48.3 billion, which is 9 percent greater than his budget proposal from last year. The budget does not include tax increases.

Education is a major focal point of the budget. The nearly \$1.1 billion in funding for K-12 education is the largest increase to basic education funding in Pennsylvania history, with \$872 million slated as a year-one investment aimed at providing all schools with the level of resources enjoyed by successful districts. The remaining \$200 million would be distributed through the Basic Education Funding Formula. The budget also makes significant changes to higher education in the state. The Governor proposes combining the Pennsylvania State System of Higher Education universities with the commonwealth's community colleges

under a new system. The budget allocates \$975 million, a 15 percent increase, to the new system and a performance-based funding formula would reward the institutions for meeting certain outcomes.

The budget promotes economic development aimed at making Pennsylvania more competitive. The budget proposes \$25 million to establish a new Main Street Matters program to continue offering local governments resources to revitalize neighborhoods. It also calls for a \$500 million bond to expand the PA SITES program which funds on-site development for Pennsylvania industries.

Shapiro also looks to tackle the housing crisis. The Whole Home Repairs program would be permanently funded at \$50 million annually. This county level program helps homeowners make vital repairs and improvements to their homes. Additionally, the \$40 million cap placed on the Pennsylvania Housing Affordability and Rehabilitation Enhancement Fund (PHARE), also known as the state

housing trust fund, will be increased to \$100 million by the 2027-28 fiscal year. This fund helps low-income residents become first time homeowners and provides funding to address blight. The budget would also provide \$5 million in flexible grants for cities and counties to address emergency housing needs, and \$10 million is included for the Homeless Assistance program.

Public safety is another focus, as Shapiro has proposed creating the Office of Gun Violence within the Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The Violence and Prevention program would receive \$37.5 million, while a new program to help communities remediate blight and improve public places most impacted by gun violence would receive \$11 million. The budget bolsters the Pennsylvania State Police by allocating \$16 million to train four additional cadet classes, increasing their forces with 432 new troopers. The budget also includes a \$30 million increase for the Fire and Emergency Medical Services Grant program, which doubles the investment in this program.

Public transportation is also supported by a proposed 1.75 percent increase in transit funding resulting in \$283 million for mass transportation in the state.

To help pay for his budget proposals, Shapiro suggests legalizing and taxing both adult use cannabis at a rate of 20 percent and skill games at a rate of 42 percent. Shapiro also proposes using part of the state's surplus to fund his budget. Pennsylvania currently has a \$14 billion surplus, which, according to the Governor, would decrease to \$11 billion if all his proposals were implemented.

For more information about the budget please visit the PA office of the state budget's [website](#).

Cosponsor Memos

Local Government Week and Day

Representative Robert Freeman and Senator Rosemary Brown have announced their intentions to introduce legislation recognizing April 8 through 14, 2024 as Local Government Week and April 10 as Local Government Day.

Fire and EMS Grant Program Reauthorization

Representative Michael Stender has announced his intention to introduce legislation to extend the sunset date of the Fire and EMS Grant Program from June 30, 2024 to June 30, 2028.

Senator Doug Mastriano has announced his intention to introduce legislation to reauthorize the Fire and EMS

Grant Program for an additional 10 years and remove the outdated COVID grants among other minor changes.

Legislation Affecting Local Government

Voter Referendum for Warehouse Development

Location: House Local Government Committee, January 31, 2024

House Bill 1960 (PN 2495), introduced by Representative Joe Emrick, would amend the Pennsylvania Municipalities Planning Code providing for a local referendum to finalize the approval of a high impact warehouse or distribution center. Under this bill, a high impact warehouse or distribution center would be defined as a proposed development of regional significance and impact that uses at least three acres and is at least 100,000 square feet.

A decision made by a planning agency or governing body that approves an application for a site containing a high impact warehouse or distribution center would not be final unless it is approved by the electorate of the municipality through a referendum. The governing body of the municipality would need to adopt a resolution to place a question on the ballot and file a copy with the board of elections of the county.

The election that includes the referendum question must be at least 100 days after the local governing body voted to approve a warehouse or distribution center's application. If a majority of voters vote yes on the referendum, the application for the proposed high impact warehouse or distribution center is approved, but if a majority of the electors vote no, the application is denied.

Public Facilities Infrastructure Grant Program

Location: House Local Government Committee, January 31, 2024

House Bill 1973 (PN 2508), introduced by Representative Tarik Khan, would amend Title 53 (Municipalities Generally) establishing a competitive Public Facilities Infrastructure Grant Program within the Department of Community and Economic Development. Money awarded under this program must be used for the repair, renovation, reconstruction or maintenance of a public facility owned by a municipality or local library.

The Department must adopt a plan that describes the priorities and method it will distribute grant money within 90 days of the bill's passage and by each March 15th thereafter. The Department would review applications and grant awards subject to its established guidelines, with consideration for the geographical distribution of money →

to ensure all areas of the commonwealth participate to the greatest extent possible. An eligible applicant would not be allowed to receive more than \$750,000 in a fiscal year. Successful applicants must provide matching funds that are equal to at least 50 percent of the grant amount awarded.

The Department must publish an annual report containing a financial statement, an itemized list of projects funded by the grants, and a description of other expenditures to be submitted to the Governor, Auditor General, the Chairs of the House and Senate Local Government Committees. Lastly, the General Assembly shall make an appropriation from the General Fund to the Department for the purpose of awarding these grants.

Affordable Housing Package

Location:

HB 1976 – Rereferred to the House Local Government Committee, February 20, 2024; HB 1988 – House Housing and Community Development Committee, January 31, 2024

[House Bills 1976 \(PN 2511\) and 1988 \(PN 2523\)](#), introduced by Representative Siegel, is a legislative package addressing affordable housing.

Multi-Unit Dwellings and Mixed-Use Development

House Bill 1976 would amend the Municipalities Planning Code requiring a municipality with a population over 5,000 to allow as a permitted use multi-unit dwelling or mixed-use development on a parcel that is in a commercial zone and that has a will-serve letter from both a municipal water and sewer system. The bill would limit parking to

one parking spot for each unit or an equivalent number of spaces through a shared parking agreement. Under the bill, multiple-unit dwellings would be a building of five or more units, and mixed-use development would limit commercial use to the first floor and nonresidential use must be less than 50 percent of the development’s total square footage.

Uniform Construction Code Single Exit Stairways

House Bill 1988 would amend the PA Construction Code Act establishing a new technical advisory committee to recommend modifications and reveal limitations of the International Building Code that would allow for a single exit stairway for multi-family dwelling no higher than six stories. Recommendations must be completed before the next scheduled update to the International Building Code and consider the adequacy and availability of a water source, presence and response time of firefighters and other factors affecting the health, safety and welfare of the public. ☐

House and Senate Session Days 2024



*reminder session dates are subject to change

House	Senate
March 18-20, 25-27	March 18-20
April 8-10, 15-17, 29-30	April 8-10, 29-30
May 1, 6-8, 20-22	May 1, 6-8



Municipal Reporter

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

2024 Topics Include:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| April
Diversity | October
Civility |
| June
Livable Communities | December
Emergency Management |
| August
Leadership | |

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



What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

BY MIA CHAPMAN, INTERN FOR HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AT THE NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES

[Permanent Supportive Housing \(PSH\)](#) refers to providing affordable housing with voluntary supportive services to address homelessness. PSH is considered a [Housing First principle](#), meaning there are no preconditions (e.g., sobriety, enrollment in mental health services, etc.) for program participants to access housing. [Housing first approaches](#) to addressing homelessness [support the idea](#) that homelessness is most efficiently ended by providing someone with access to safe, decent and affordable housing. PHS is designed [to build independent living and tenancy skills](#), with [services](#) that connect people with community-based health care, treatment, and employment services. [The approach](#) to services provided in PSH may vary from on-site case coordination or management that ensures tenants' access to a wide variety of services to on-site location of those services.

Who is Supported by Permanent Supportive Housing?

PSH is a proven solution to [homelessness](#), specifically those who are chronically homeless. Investments in PSH have [historically](#) helped reduce the number

of people experiencing chronic homelessness, as well as generally improving [housing stability and health](#). Compared to [emergency services](#), PSH is a cost-effective, preventative measure to addressing homelessness.

PSH programs are often created with a specific vulnerable subpopulation in mind to provide housing and necessary services to those in need. For example, some PSH programs target chronically homeless people with disabilities, LGBTQIA+ elders and youth, and older adults.

City Spotlights:

Salinas, CA and Fayetteville, AR

In collaboration with Step Up and Homekeys, the [City of Salinas](#) has a permanent supportive housing program that keeps individuals housed. The program uses the “Housing First” model to minimize barriers to entry into permanent supportive housing. The project is funded in-part by Family Homelessness Challenge Grants and Technical Assistance Program



grants designed to promote rapid innovation, accelerate nascent programs, and expand promising practices to create scalable solutions that can be shared across the state to address and ultimately end family homelessness. **Housing types** in the city and surrounding region funded by the PSH program include hotels, multi-family apartments, and adult residential facilities.

The **Hearth Program** is implemented by the **City of Fayetteville** and designed to provide Permanent Supportive Housing and case management to those experiencing homelessness. The program fosters **partnerships** between landlords and the city to provide necessary supportive services to those experiencing homelessness and in need of support beyond the methods of **Transitional Housing**. Additional **supportive services** include applying for government assistance, employment opportunities, health insurance, and financial literacy training.

How Can Cities Provide Permanent Supportive Housing?

To better support those experiencing housing insecurity and homelessness, cities can consider developing solutions such as:

- Investing in and collaborating with local non-profit organizations to create PSH projects that support vulnerable members of the community.
- Developing innovative funding sources to finance PSH programs at the local level. For example, many cities have utilized **Medicaid funding** to help bridge local funding gaps for service provision in PSH.
- Incorporating robust community engagement processes into the development of PSH programs to best encapsulate the needs and demands of the community, specifically those with lived experiences with homelessness. Additionally, community engagement processes will allow for more effective education strategies for those in opposition to the development of PSH programs. □



How Does Homelessness Impact Child Health and Developmental Outcomes?

A 2021 study found that as many as 1.3 million infants, toddlers and preschoolers experience family homelessness each year in the United States. It is crucial to understand the impact of homelessness on infants and toddlers and for city leaders to create and implement responsive intervention programs and policies. [Learn more »](#)

Read about great projects and partnerships for hope in the Housing Authority of The City of Erie's latest Winter 2023-2024 Newsletter: [Newsletters - Housing Authority of the City of Erie \(hace.org\)](#)

Public Finance

UNDERSTANDING RANSOMWARE

**CYBERSECURITY HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:
HERE ARE SOME THINGS TO KNOW**

BY MATT CONLIN, PLGIT SENIOR MARKETING REPRESENTATIVE

According to information technology specialists Corvus, the number of ransomware attacks in the first three quarters of 2023 increased by almost 70% compared to the first three quarters of 2022. ¹

Each attack disrupted services, was expensive in terms of costs to regain data or system access, and repair security deficiencies. Sadly, many attacks were also “aided” by avoidable oversights. Here are just a few examples:

The city of Dallas, Texas, suffered a ransomware attack on May 3, causing significant network outages and forcing Dallas courts to close for the entire month. Following the attack, the Dallas City Council approved an \$8.5 million mitigation and recovery budget to incorporate external cybersecurity professional services, identity theft and fraud protection services, and breach notification services. ²

Minneapolis Public Schools announced in March 2023 that students’ data had been breached, exposing over 300,000 sensitive files containing details describing student assaults, psychiatric hospitalizations, and more. ³

The U.S. Marshals Service (USMS) confirmed that the government agency suffered a ransomware attack through which attackers gained access to sensitive law enforcement data including personally identifiable information on subjects of USMS investigations and some employees. Disruptions continued for three months. ⁴

These types of attacks can happen anywhere, and to any organization with an internet connection. PFM Asset Management LLC (PFMAM) is investment advisor and administrator to PLGIT, and as such we take these kinds of threats seriously. PFMAM believes raising awareness about cyberattacks like ransomware is essential to the stewardship of public funds. In this article we will discuss why ransomware is a threat to local governments and provide some tips for your consideration that may help you combat it.

What is Ransomware?

Ransomware is a type of malicious software designed to make files and systems inaccessible to the rightful owner in order to demand a price, or “ransom,” for restoring access.

Network hackers use a variety of ways to gain illicit access to computing devices in order to plant software. A few of these means of access include:

- **Phishing:** An email that makes a personal appeal to influence a user to click a link or run a program. Once the link is opened, the software gains access, and infects the user’s system.
- **Trojan Horses:** Viruses that are embedded or disguised within innocuous programs or even seemingly necessary software that an unwitting user runs on their machine.
- **Worms:** A self-replicating program that moves through computer networks. Unlike the methods above, a worm does not depend on tricking users – all this form of ransomware needs is an undefended device to access and infect a network.
- **Password hacks:** a program that seeks access by using common passwords until one works. This approach may seem like a longshot for a hacker, but it

simply plays the percentages: careless or simple passwords and poor network security can turn an impossibility into an inevitability.

- **Networking vulnerabilities:** many programs simply exploit missing operating system patches, outdated software releases, and misconfigured firewalls to gain access.

Once ransomware has infected a computer or a network, it quickly notifies users on the network that their data has been taken hostage.

Invariably, there is a payment requested and instructions for how to pay it. Some programs even employ negotiating tactics, such as offering some non-essential files back as a goodwill gesture or using a tiered pricing structure based on how long it takes to pay the ransom.

How do I recognize ransomware when I see it?

Unfortunately, when you see ransomware, your system has probably already been infected. There may be a countdown clock, a description of how the data has been made inaccessible and what the user may need to do to get it back. Three of the most common forms of this type of software are:

Blockers are programs that prevent you from using the infected device. It could be a browser window that cannot be closed through the usual means, a fake software update window that demands action, a fake message from a law enforcement agency or a program that floods the screen with unwanted images.

Encryption scrambles data in an attempt to protect it from being read by anyone except those with the “key,” which is usually a random string of alphanumeric characters. Some forms of encryption can be reversed, but not without significant time and cost that is often beyond the value of the data. For this reason,

to add a layer of fear to the attack, blocker ransomware will often claim that data has been encrypted, even if it has not.

Leakware is a form of ransomware that threatens to release sensitive information publicly instead of inhibiting access.

How Big of a Problem Is This Really for Local Governments?

There are a number of factors for the steep jump in attacks referenced in the beginning of this article, but the most conspicuous one is the rise of hybrid and remote work patterns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

With more employees working from home, it may be harder to verify whether messages are genuine. If employees are connecting from outside the company’s network perimeter, or using personal devices, it may be difficult for traditional anti-malware technology to block these incoming messages.

With many municipalities making these remote and hybrid work practices a permanent part of their operations, hackers have many opportunities to target isolated employees who have become familiar with using digital channels like email as their main way of keeping in touch with colleagues.

Anyone can fall victim to a ransomware attack, but the financial constraints placed on a local government’s ability to fund cybersecurity, combined with internet-delivered services and the data stored in municipalities’ systems, and incentives to resolve public services as rapidly and easily as possible make governments a perfect target.

It is also important to note that the damages of a ransomware attack go well beyond the actual ransom – in fact paying the ransom could only be the beginning. A ransomware attack can cost an organization millions

in lost productivity and damage its reputation. Not to mention the time and resources it could take to get the affected systems in full working order again.

How Can a Local Government Seek to Protect Itself?

Everyone with internet access at a municipality should understand the current cyber risks that exist, and their role in helping to avoid potential breaches. The reality is that today, you may be as likely to benefit from your cybersafety training as you are from your fire safety or medical emergency training.

The fallout from a ransomware attack can be at best inconveniencing, and at worst, crippling. The good news is that there are ways to help prevent them:

Spam Filters - Spam filters can stop almost all potentially malicious emails, especially emails containing suspicious attachments, links, etc. Unfortunately, it only takes one email to get through to cause significant damage. Therefore, end-users must be vigilant as well, understanding the risks associated with clicking on unknown links and downloading attachments.

Antivirus Software - Antivirus software plays an important role in protecting against ransomware, since it is a type of malware. While antivirus software may not prevent the next big breach, if kept up to date, it can be good way to help protect against more well-known forms of malware. To keep antivirus software and signatures up to date, we recommend that local governments regularly conduct scans of their individual computers and networks.

Vigilance - Vigilance applies to both information technology processes and the people who use them. Each year, new software vulnerabilities are raised, and patches to fix them are issued, and some of the largest ransomware attacks take place after those weaknesses and solutions have

already been identified. A notable example of this is the WannaCry ransomware worm, which wrought an estimated \$4 billion in damages in 2017 by exploiting a loophole that was patched weeks before the worm became widespread. And despite the havoc wreaked by that software, [TechCrunch.com](https://www.techcrunch.com) reported that more than one million computer devices around the world still remain “unpatched” and vulnerable.⁵

Local governments should have a routine process for distributing and installing critical security patches, especially considering the increases in remote-work scenarios. They should also have trained security professionals who understand the vulnerabilities of their system and can take proactive steps to mitigate the risks.

Back-ups - Since a ransomware threat is directly related to data, one of the chief ways to mitigate ransomware risk is to design a back-up system that is largely independent from a local government’s regular network. The separation helps ensure that a ransomware attack doesn’t infect the back-up as well. Installing a back-up system will not prevent a cybersecurity threat, but it can make an attack less damaging, especially if a response is executed quickly.

Ransomware attacks have reached new levels in the cyber threat equation for local governments. While the most sophisticated attacks may require equally sophisticated prevention measures, the majority can be avoided with widely available technology, a well-thought-out approach to network and data protection, and end-user vigilance and education.

Matt Conlin is a Senior Marketing Representative with PLGIT, serving clients in the central part of the state.

He can be reached at conlinm@pfmam.com. □

Sources:

¹ *Corvus Threat Intel, “Q3 Ransomware Report: Global Ransomware Attacks Up More Than 95% Over 2022,” Corvus, October 24, 2023.*

² *Waldman, A (2023, December 2) “10 of the Biggest Ransomware Attacks in 2023”, TechTarget.*

³ *Bajak, Frank, Heather Hollingsworth, et al., “Ransomware criminals are dumping kids’ private files online after school hacks,” Associated Press, July 5, 2023.*

⁴ *Waldman*

⁵ *Whitaker, Z. (2019, May 12) “Two years after WannaCry, a million computers remain at risk” TechCrunch.*



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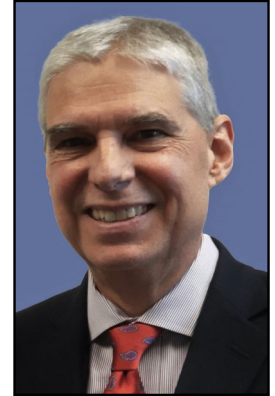
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APMM News . . .

APMM Members,

Today we are happy to announce that Tom Fontaine, Manager of State College, will add to his professional duties, Interim Managing Director of the Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management, effective March 1, 2024. As a Municipal Manager for over 40 years, Tom's knowledge of APMM and its members is well suited for this role. Previously he served as President and Executive Committee Member of APMM and past Vice President of the ICMA Executive Board.



Tom Fontaine

As Interim Managing Director, Tom will liaison with Officers and the Executive Committee of APMM, liaison and collaborate with key Pennsylvania Municipal League staff, and help prepare for and participate in APMM Executive Committee and Committee Meetings. He will assist Host Committee activities for the 2024 International City/County Management Association Conference in Pittsburgh. He will attend, support and participate in APMM Conferences, including the Annual Conference and ICMA activities related to Pennsylvania.

The League is pleased that Tom Fontaine has accepted this important role to help strengthen the long-standing and positive relationship with APMM and The League and to support municipal management and good government in our commonwealth.

For APMM purposes, Tom may be reached at tfontaine@pml.org.

Thank you,



John S. Brenner
League Executive Director
APMM Secretary/Treasurer

Registration is now open!

APMM Annual Conference

May 20-22, 2024

Wind Creek Bethlehem
 77 Wind Creek Blvd.
 Bethlehem, PA 18015

Topics

The room rate is \$189 per night +10% tax. Reservations are available **until Friday, April 26, 2024**, or the room block has been sold out.

Every registered APMM Member will receive a gray Devon & Jones CrownLux Performance Plaited Polo shirt. Please be sure to include your selection and size on the registration form.

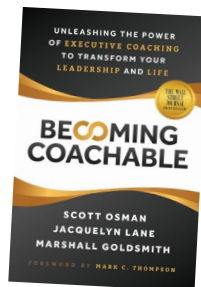
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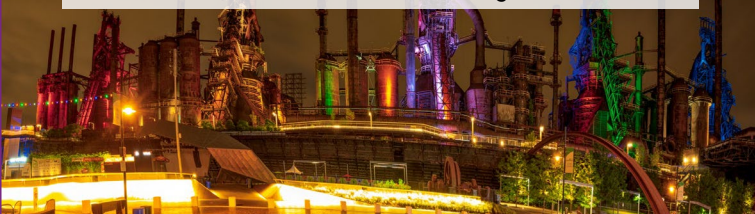
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Golf Outing

Monday, May 20, 2024 - Riverview Country Club, One Riverview Place, Easton, PA - 11:00 a.m. shotgun start. Two drink tickets and lunch are included. Golfers need to be registered conference attendees/guest or their company should be a participating exhibitor or sponsor.

PSATC President's Message



[JOHN J. JABLOWSKI, JR.](#)
[COUNCILMEMBER](#)
[WILKES-BARRE TOWNSHIP](#)



firstclasstownship.org

Dear Commissioners,

Since 1925, the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners (PSATC) has been empowering First Class Leadership by providing a collaborative approach to building stronger local government.

Check out our new website, www.firstclasstownship.org to learn how we are driving stronger more effective leadership in an ever-changing local landscape.

At the very core of what we do as municipal leaders, is to meet human needs and services through our commitment to improving the quality of life in the communities we serve. This takes many forms such as public safety, code enforcement, recreation, health, and the many other services local governments provide.

The challenge that we all face is a rapidly changing workforce in a rapidly changing demographic environment in Pennsylvania including a critical shortage of folks seeking public service as a career path.

Let's face it, very few 4th graders desire to grow up to be a code officer or assistant township manager. With all due respect to these important positions and others, the talent pool for municipal staff is dwindling at an alarming rate.

A recently released report by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania outlines some of the rapidly changing demographics in our commonwealth making this challenge even greater in the years to come. Pennsylvanians are rapidly aging and our "working age" population (regardless of profession) will subsequently decrease quickly over the next few years.

So, if you think it's tough to get municipal employees now to deliver these "human services," hold on to your hat because the challenge is about to get bigger.

As municipal leaders, we need to look at ways to transform the way we think about delivering municipal services. Looking to both technology and municipal collaboration is part of the solution. From municipal management to finance officers, public works employees and certainly public safety professionals, hiring staff will continue to be a growing challenge.

Digital constituent engagement, (24-hour online services), workplace flexibility for staff, regional collaborations for services (zoning/building inspection, recreation) are just a few ways to begin.

Building capacity to meet these challenges needs to be a hallmark of the way we manage our communities. PSATC and our Executive Committee recently undertook a bold step on how we look at our organization and the future of the way we operate.

By improving service delivery systems through quality, efficiency, accessibility and coordination among governments, providers, and stakeholders, we can truly drive a better quality of life in the communities we call home.

Looking at human services in the context of Pennsylvania Local Government, we must be mindful of the environment in which we are operating in 2024. What worked well in 1984 probably doesn't work well in 2024. However, I submit that many communities are still operating their approach to delivering human services the way they were in 1984.

As leaders of our municipalities, let's examine creative methods to engage an ever-changing complexity in staff, promote constructive community participation, collaborate with our neighbors, and ensure that public service is viewed as a noble profession.

PSATC continues to encourage local governments to build capacity and create efficiencies to deliver critical human services. In fact, a few of these initiatives are outlined on our website with more to follow.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to providing the various human services that make our communities a vibrant place to live, work and raise a family.

Kind regards,

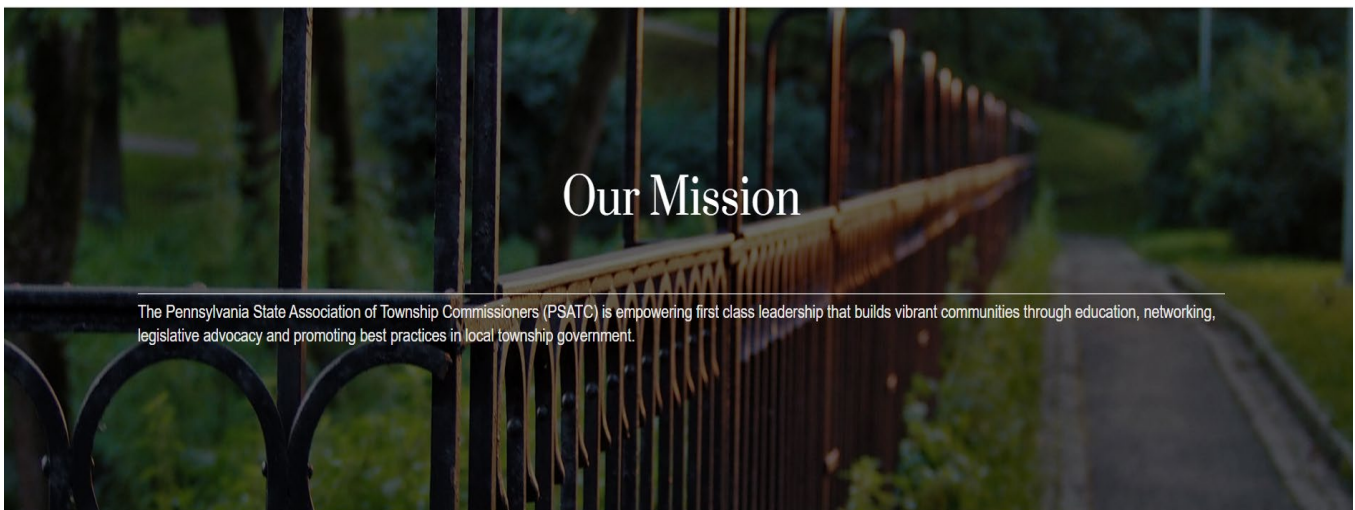
John J. Jablowski, Jr.

John J. Jablowski, Jr.

New PSATC Website



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