



HISTORICAL HIGHLIGHTS – 125th ANNIVERSARY

The Pennsylvania Municipal League is the Commonwealth's oldest municipal association and one of the five oldest in the nation.

In 1899, Bradford Mayor J.C Greenewald and Erie Mayor John Depinet created the idea of bringing mayors of Pennsylvania's Third Class Cities together to discuss common issues and solutions.

Ten Mayors met in October of 1899 and formed the League of Cities of the Third Class. York Mayor Frank Geise invited the group to hold its first meeting in the City of York.

In May of 1900, the first annual convention, where a constitution and bylaws were created, included delegates from Allentown, Altoona, Bradford, Chester, Easton, Erie, Harrisburg, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lock Haven, McKeesport, Meadville, Reading, Wilks-Barre and York.

From the beginning, a legislative committee was formed to work with the General Assembly on legislation impacting local government such as: a uniform method of inspecting milk, meat & ice; creating a uniform system of sanitation; establishing a civil service for police; writing tax laws and tax collection; addressing stream pollution and sewage disposal and dealing with garbage and ash collection and disposal

The League office was set up in Room 300 of Harrisburg City Hall in 1940. A small staff provided answers to member questions, furnished copies of ordinances and keep members updated on legislative matters.

In 1955, with an amendment for Cities of the First, Second and Second Class A, the organization became the League of Cities.

In 1982, the membership expanded further, including Home Rule Charter communities. By 1986, the Board of Directors approved opening membership to any municipality in the Commonwealth with shared interests.

During the 1980's, several member driven programs were formed namely the Public Employer Labor Relations Advisory Service, PennPRIME and UCOMP insurance trusts. An essay contest was also established to offer scholarships to students and encourage civic engagement.

Led by Executive Director Bill Hansell, the League established affiliate contracts with the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners and the Pennsylvania Municipal Managers Association.

During the 1990's our name changed to the Pennsylvania League of Cities and Municipalities and our building was purchased one block from the Capitol.



The League marked its 100th Annual Convention in June of 1999 with the release of the Blueprint for the Millennium highlighting critical issues and offering suggested solutions.

In the 2000's through League advocacy efforts the General Assembly changed the Occupational Privilege Tax to the Local Services Tax and raised it to \$52.

The League launched the Core Communities in Crisis Report to expand local options for funding municipal government.

The 2010's saw the creation of the Business Leaders Network to engage the corporate community and the first KaBOOM! playground build in Bethlehem.

Executive Director Jack Garner retired after decades of service to the League. The Board dedicated our office as the "Garner Building."

To reflect the growing membership of cities, boroughs, townships and home rule communities, the membership changed the name to the Pennsylvania Municipal League in 2012. The logo was updated and rebranded in 2018.

During the 2020 pandemic, the convention was changed to Municipal Leadership Summit and welcomed the Pennsylvania State Association of Township Commissioners and the Pennsylvania Career Fire Chiefs.

The League's 501c3 Center for Municipal Development was renamed the Schuettler Center after retiring Director Rick Schuettler.

Looking to the future, in 2022 the League launched Envision 2032 to help chart the future of municipal government. Priority areas include: infrastructure, community development, economic vitality, equity and civic engagement, municipal finance, public health and safety and sustainability

The League remains a well-established and respected organization with professional staff now serving nearly 150 municipalities across Pennsylvania.

With our updated mission, vision and values and a new 3-year strategic plan, we stand ready to assist our members, partners and state officials in charting a new course for the next 125 years.