



OHIO MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

2019 - 2020
Public Policy Agenda

REBUILDING THE RELATIONSHIP

The Ohio Municipal League (OML) is an association of Ohio's great cities and villages. Long the driving force in our state's economy, Ohio's municipalities are home to 8.5 million citizens and 80% of our state's businesses. Our strength is a testament to the innovation and ingenuity of our residents, businesses, and community institutions and to responsive, local decision-making — based on home rule authority, recognized in our state constitution over one hundred years ago.

In recent years, our efforts have been hampered by a difficult relationship with the state. Municipalities have suffered from repeated attempts to preempt our home rule authority, cut local government funding, and usurp our role in imposing, collecting, and distributing our local taxes.

We enter 2019 with the belief that Ohio is stronger when the state and municipalities respect each other and work together. The OML stands ready to rebuild our relationship with the state, based upon mutual respect of our home rule and state authority, common purpose to serve our citizens and grow the economy, and a commitment to regular and constructive communication, and collaboration.

To guide our work, we are pleased to present our 2019-2020 Public Policy Agenda. Our agenda is organized by our core values of creating jobs, protecting our citizens, investing in public infrastructure and clean water, and advancing good government and fiscal responsibility.

We look forward to working with state officials and our local business, labor, faith, civic, and community leaders – all of us partnering for stronger cities and villages and for a stronger Ohio.

2019-2020 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Restore Local Government Fund (LGF)

- Return to historical funding levels
- Stem future cuts to LGF revenue sources
- Refund \$58 million in municipal supplemental distributions taken in the past two budgets

Preserve Home Rule

- Support local decision-making on important matters
- Avoid statewide preemptions
- Guard against unfunded state mandates

Respect Municipal Tax Authority

- Reverse damage of businesses opting-in to file net profits through Ohio Business Gateway
- Head-off attempts for state collection of local individual income taxes
- Prevent state changes in local tax management

Invest in Public Infrastructure

- Increase state funding for municipal transportation infrastructure
- Provide state funds for local water, sewer, and broadband investments
- Increase authority of municipalities to raise permissive license fees

Partner to Fight Opioid Addiction

- Earmark funds for local public and private health and safety initiatives
- Partner on educational and prevention efforts
- Collect and share more data and information with public health and safety officials

2019-2020 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA— Our Core Values

CREATING JOBS

The Ohio Municipal League advocates for policies that help our communities create jobs, advance economic development, and promote sustainable economic growth.

Economic Growth: State policy should support and facilitate job creation and economic development efforts by municipalities, providing more tools and flexibility to develop and redevelop properties, retain and expand jobs, and promote workforce development in partnership with business.

Annexation: State policy should support and facilitate the rights of property owners and municipalities to annex property and assure economic development, essential municipal services, and fiscal responsibility.

Housing: State policy should support and facilitate the development of a broad spectrum of safe, affordable, fair housing and provide municipalities with the tools and authority to ensure property owners maintain their properties.

Land Use Planning, Management, and Control: State policy should support and facilitate the primacy of municipalities in land use and development matters within and around their jurisdictions to promote effective and sustainable growth, safe buildings and infrastructure, and management of right of way.

Municipalities work hand in hand with our businesses and residents to strengthen our economy. We must partner with state leaders to find new tools to promote investment, job creation, and workforce development.

PROTECTING OUR CITIZENS

The Ohio Municipal League advocates for policies that help our communities protect our citizens through responsible public safety and health measures.

Fighting the Opioid Epidemic: State policy should support and facilitate new funding with state and local cooperation to address the threat of opioids and other harmful drugs through law enforcement, addiction treatment, and public education.

Homeland Security and Emergency Management Policy: State policy should support and facilitate intergovernmental coordination and cooperation, training, and investment on matters of public safety, health, and emergency management.

Supporting First Responders: State policy should support and facilitate direct operational and financial assistance to local agencies managing first responders, health services, and infrastructure on homeland security and public emergencies.

Liquor Control Policy: State policy should support and facilitate cooperation and understanding of municipal recommendations and on local safety and operations in the regulation of liquor permits within a municipality.

Our communities are on the front line fighting this opioid crisis. Our public safety and health officials need stronger funding, information-sharing, and cooperation from the state to fight crime and treat those in need.

INVESTING IN PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND CLEAN WATER

The Ohio Municipal League advocates for policies that help our communities provide clean drinking water, safe and efficient transportation, safe energy, and quality parks through reliable public infrastructure investments and services.

Transportation: State policy should support and facilitate a safe and efficient transportation system with adequate funding of state infrastructure within municipalities and for effective local public transit systems and work with municipalities to expand local funding and public-private partnership tools.

Clean Drinking Water: State policy should support and facilitate local agencies providing clean drinking water and sanitary and stormwater management services and should provide adequate funding to help locals comply with environmental mandates and funding and regulation to ensure water sources are protected from natural and man-made risks.

Prevailing Wage: State policy should support and facilitate project management by municipalities and allow local options and thresholds for prevailing wage projects.

Broadband and Smart and Emerging Technology: State policy should support and facilitate public and private investment in broadband and smart and emerging technology and respect local authority over the use of local public facilities, lands, and right of way for these investments.

Clean water, safe roads, and information technology are not local issues – they are fundamental to our state’s public health and safety and economic competitiveness. Our state must become a stronger partner in local infrastructure initiatives.

ADVANCING GOOD GOVERNMENT AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The Ohio Municipal League advocates for policies that help our communities promote ethical, efficient, and fiscally responsible governance through effective leadership and financial management, guided by the Home Rule of our citizens.

Home Rule: State policy should support and facilitate the Home Rule of municipalities, grounded in our State Constitution and guided by our citizens and should resist infringement of this authority.

Taxes and Finances: State policy should support and facilitate the right of municipalities to impose and collect an income tax on earnings within its boundaries to provide funding for essential municipal services, like police, fire, emergency medical services, and snow removal.

Fiscal Responsibility: State policy should support and facilitate municipal management and should not impose unfunded mandates, employment restrictions, or other impairments to local decision-making, funding, and governance.

Ethics: State policy should support and facilitate good government practices and training of local elected officials and employees on ethics, financing, management, procurement, and customer service.

Cooperation and Innovation: State policy should support and facilitate municipalities cooperating and sharing services with other public agencies and promoting innovation to improve service delivery, customer service, and cost efficiencies.

To serve our residents and promote development effectively, we need local decision-making and local financial management, without state preemptions, unfunded mandates, and tampering with our finances. Let’s rebuild our state-municipal relationship based upon mutual respect and cooperation.

STRONGER MUNICIPALITIES MEAN A STRONGER OHIO ECONOMY: A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND ACTION AGENDA

OVERVIEW

The OML commissioned the Strategic Framework and Action Agenda in 2016 to better understand and address key policy and economic issues impacting Ohio's cities and villages and to do so with the direct and substantive input of its members. This analysis argues that because the municipal sector is the state's primary engine of economic growth, it is essential that state policy makers focus on revitalizing the state-municipal partnership. Put plainly, stronger municipalities mean a stronger Ohio economy.

Economic Forces Undermining Municipalities

The same structural economic forces that have undermined and continue to challenge the State of Ohio also have destabilized Ohio's municipalities. The decades-long shift from an industrial to an increasingly post-industrial, knowledge-based economy and the effects of the Great Recession left most local communities reeling with high rates of unemployment and underemployment. Despite recent state job growth, many municipalities continue to struggle.

State Policy Impacts

Additional stress came with the double whammy of net state tax cuts and a dramatic reduction in the earmarked portion of these state revenues going to the Local Government Fund. This revenue sharing reduction amounted to an estimated \$453 million loss in CY 2015 alone. This does not include the state's decision to eliminate two important sources of local tax revenue: the estate tax and the tangible personal property tax.

This confluence of forces has pushed Municipalities to:

- Delay infrastructure maintenance, repair and upgrading
- Reduce investments in economic development
- Lower investments in public health and safety
- Increase municipal taxes and fees
- Replace full-time employees with part-time employees and increase outsourcing

The OML is using this Strategic Framework and Action Agenda to:

- Guide its 2019-2020 Priorities and Public Policy Agenda
- Position municipalities as stronger economic development partners
- Create Leadership Initiatives to improve collaboration, measure progress, and report on the strength of municipalities

HISTORY & MEMBERSHIP

With roots dating back over one hundred years, the Ohio Municipal League was formally founded in 1952 and represents the collective interest of Ohio cities and villages before the Ohio General Assembly and the state elected and administrative offices. An official legislative policy is developed every other year and adopted by our membership at the annual conference.

The League is incorporated as a nonprofit organization governed by a Board of Trustees, elected by the membership. The board is the policy making body and appoints and Executive Director to manage the League under its general direction.

Any city or village may become a member of the League. Upon becoming a member, a municipality's elected and key appointed officials are eligible to use League services.

The League also manages the following member associations:

- The Mayors Association of Ohio
- The Ohio City/County Management Association
- The Ohio Municipal Attorneys Association
- The Ohio Municipal Clerks Association
- Municipal Finance Officers Association of Ohio
- The Ohio Municipal Income Tax Administrators committee
- The Ohio Association of Public Safety Directors

**To join the League or to learn more about member services,
please contact the Ohio Municipal League at:
(614) 221-4349 or go to www.omloho.org.**

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