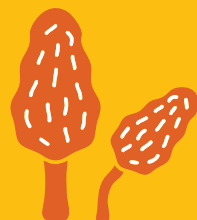




MICHIGAN MUNICIPAL LEAGUE **CONVENTION2025**

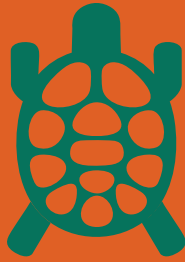


**GRAND RAPIDS, MI
SEPT. 17-19, 2025**

PROGRAM



M M L
CONV
2025



2025 Convention Objectives

Convention 2025 attendees will leave this year's event with:

- **Activation**—Inspire communities to embrace new ideas
- **Empowerment**—Strive for prosperity, quality of life and trust and belonging
- **Innovation**—Look at your communities with fresh eyes
- **Optimism**—Cultivate a positive outlook for the future
- **Tangible tools**—The information you need to take meaningful action

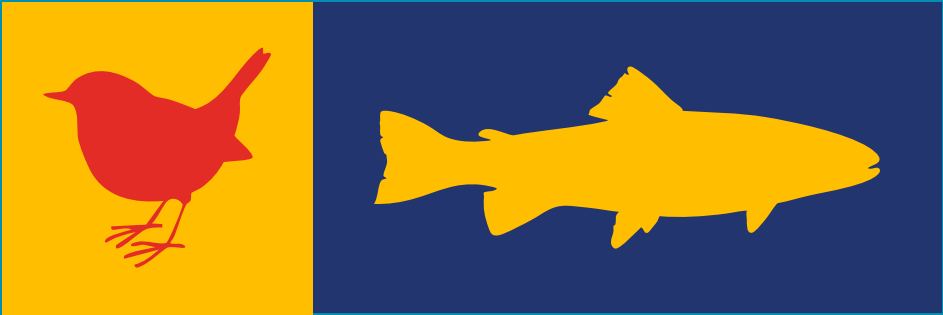


Table of Contents

Welcome	4
A Vision for Thriving Communities	5
Thank You to Our Sponsors	6–7
Michigan Municipal League Board of Trustees	8
Agenda-at-a-Glance	10–14
General Information	15–16
Agenda in Detail	18–32
Tuesday	18
Wednesday	18–21
Thursday	21–28
Friday	29–32
2025 Award Winners	35–39
Future League Events	40



Welcome to Convention 2025!

On behalf of the Michigan Municipal League staff and our Board of Trustees, I am honored to welcome you to this year's Convention in Grand Rapids. My name is Don Gerrie, and I am the Mayor of Sault Ste. Marie and the President of the League's Board of Trustees.

Convention brings together local leaders—city managers, mayors, councilmembers, municipal attorneys, and other officials—to connect and learn how Michigan communities can become more forward-looking, thriving places. We have a full slate of speakers and sessions on the topics that matter most to our communities, including childcare, housing, A.I., food systems, and sustainability.

The League is excited to share with you the new projects and initiatives we've developed over the past year. These include our new online learning platform, which offers local officials training at your fingertips, whenever you need it; and our MI Home Program, our proposal to accelerate housing construction and rehabilitation within the state.

I know that we're all looking forward with great anticipation to hearing from the Community Excellence Award (CEA) finalists. Hart, Milford, Negaunee, and Roscommon will showcase their great work in placemaking and building thriving communities. Don't forget to vote for your favorite project!

Having said all that, I hope you take the opportunity to enjoy all that Grand Rapids has to offer and all that the League has prepared to celebrate Michigan's communities.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Don Gerrie', with a stylized, flowing script.

Don Gerrie
Michigan Municipal League Board President
Mayor of Sault Ste. Marie

A Vision for Thriving Communities!

As a spirited advocate for the importance of placemaking and its connection to economic progress, the Michigan Municipal League continues to evolve its perspective on and approach to community wealth building. Wealth is not simply economic—it is an interconnected system between health, culture, and other quality-of-life factors.

According to older frameworks, if a municipality had a certain tax base, occupied store fronts downtown, and one main employer, then that community was doing great. Obviously, that's not the whole picture. The life of a place is tied to its people and the opportunities afforded them.

Thriving communities is the evolution of our work to address factors crucial to creating sustainable, livable, desirable places. For Michigan to succeed in the coming decades, our communities must offer the sort of quality of life that attracts new residents and businesses while supporting those already here.

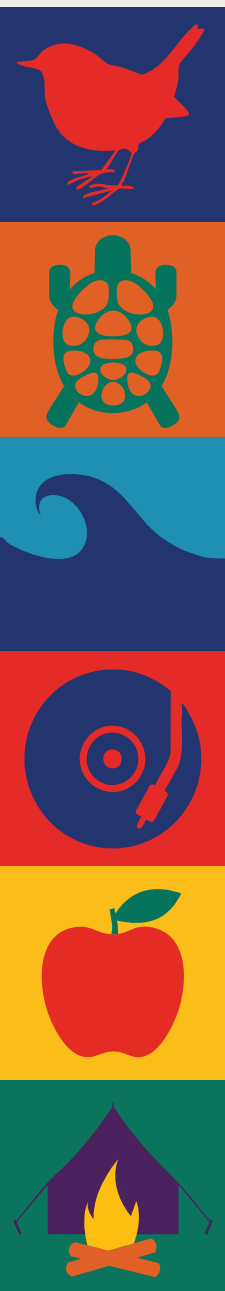
The path to a thriving Michigan requires partnerships between governments, businesses, nonprofits, and philanthropy—where each partner is committed to the work of delivering the key indicators for long-term prosperity.

Key Indicators for Thriving Communities

- Health & Public Safety
- Housing
- Economic & Financial Security
- Natural Resources
- Infrastructure (Physical & Virtual)
- Arts & Culture
- Lifelong Learning

We hope that Convention attendees will encounter ideas and strategies for reimagining what success could look like in each of these areas in their daily work as local officials.

Thank you to our 2025 Convention Sponsors!



Thank you to our 2025 Convention Sponsors!



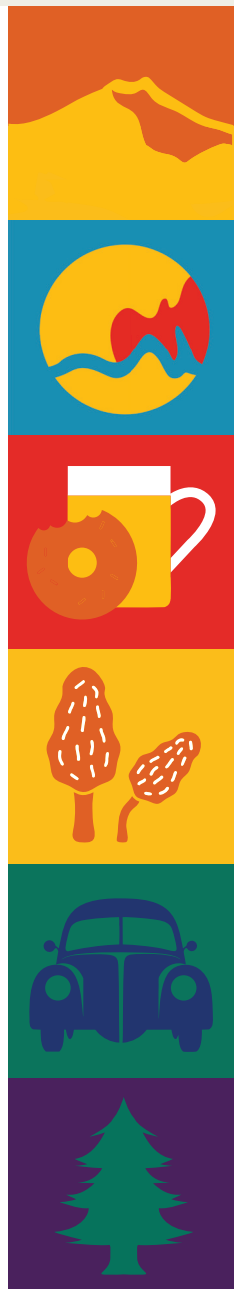
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2025–2028

Michigan Municipal League

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Dan Gilmartin
Executive Director
and CEO

HEALTH CARE IS PERSONAL. SO ARE ITS COSTS.

Perhaps no part of the economy affects each of us as personally as health care. It brings new life into the world. It cures diseases. It saves lives.

It's also expensive. Your ability to afford health care is essential — and affordable health insurance is a big part of that. As prices for medical services and prescription drugs continue to rise, so does the pressure on health insurance affordability. Last year, our prescription drug costs alone grew 15% — five times faster than inflation. This concerns us, because it pressures your health insurance costs.

We want you to better understand why this is happening. We want you to know everything we are doing about it, including our efforts to lower the costs of running our company by \$600 million while we maintain the quality services our members expect.

We want you to be engaged. Informed. Involved in the conversation. Because health care is personal — and we need to make it work for everyone.

Affordability matters.

Start here — MIBlueDaily.com/Affordability



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W016160

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

- 10 a.m.–12 p.m.** MML Foundation Board of Directors Meeting
Location: Miller Canfield Grand Rapids office
- 2–4:30 p.m.** League Board of Trustees Meeting
Location: Gerald R. Ford Presidential Ballroom
- 6:30–9:30 p.m.** League Board of Trustees Dinner
Location: Grand Rapids Art Museum, 101 Monroe Center St. NW Grand Rapids, MI 49503

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

- 8 a.m.–6 p.m.** Registration Open
Location: Center Concourse
- 9:45 a.m.** Education Tours Depart from Hotel
- 10 a.m.–12 p.m.** Education Tours (additional fee and pre-registration required)
- 12 p.m.** Education Tours Return to Hotel
- 12–5:30 p.m.** League Membership and Information Table Open
Location: Center Concourse
- 12:30–1:45 p.m.** Networking Lunch
Location: DeVos Place Ballroom A
- 12:30–1:45 p.m.** First-Time Attendee Lunch (pre-registration required)
Location: Atrium Room
- 2–4 p.m.** General Session – “What Did You Think You Were Getting Into?":The Power and Pitfalls of Leadership & Community Excellence
Award Presentations
Location: Ambassador Ballroom

4–5:30 p.m.	Community Excellence Award Voting Open <i>Location: Center Concourse</i>
4–4:30 p.m.	Annual Business Meeting Delegate Check-In <i>Location: Pantlind Foyer</i>
4:30–5:30 p.m.	Annual Business Meeting <i>Location: Pantlind Ballroom</i>
6–8 p.m.	Welcome Reception <i>Location: Ashton Cocktail Lounge, The B.O.B., 20 Monroe Ave. NW Grand Rapids, MI 49503</i>

Thursday, September 18, 2025

7 a.m.–4:30 p.m.	Registration Open <i>Location: Center Concourse</i>
7:30–9 a.m.	Networking Breakfast <i>Location: DeVos Place Ballroom A</i>
7:30–9 a.m.	Michigan Association of Mayors (MAM) Annual Meeting & Breakfast (pre-registration required) <i>Location: Atrium Room</i>
8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.	Community Excellence Award Voting Open <i>Location: Center Concourse</i>
8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.	League Membership and Information Table Open <i>Location: Center Concourse</i>
9–10:30 a.m.	General Session – Redefining Community for People, Place, and Purpose <i>Location: Ambassador Ballroom</i>
10:30–10:45 a.m.	Networking Break <i>Location: Center Concourse</i>

10:45–11:45 a.m.

Breakout Sessions

A.I., Access, and the Future of Governance:
Closing the Tech Gap in Communities

Location: Senator Vandenberg Room

Thriving Communities for a Thriving Michigan

Location: Pantlind Ballroom

Practical Sustainability and Michigan Green
Communities Update

Location: Gerald R. Ford Presidential Ballroom

From Farmer's Markets to Your Table:
Municipal Food Policy in Michigan

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Reviving the Corridor: Reimagining
Commercial Zones for Housing, Transit, and
Community Well-Being

Location: Governors Room

11:45 a.m.–1 p.m.

Networking Lunch

Location: DeVos Place Ballroom A

11:45 a.m.–1 p.m.

Michigan Women in Municipal Government
(MWIMG) Annual Meeting & Luncheon
(additional fee and pre-registration required)

Location: Atrium Room

1–2:30 p.m.

General Session – Mural, Mural on the Wall:
Placemaking Through Art

Location: Ambassador Ballroom

2:30–2:45 p.m.

Networking Break

Location: Center Concourse

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Breakout Sessions

Making Your Community “Child Care Ready”

Location: Senator Vandenburg Room

Civility in Your Community—

Should We Agree to Disagree?

Location: Pantlind Ballroom

Creative Storm Water Management in
the City of Grand Rapids

Location: Gerald R. Ford Presidential Ballroom

Steadying the Ship: Smart Budgeting
Strategies for Uncertain Times

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Legislative Update

Location: Governors Room

4–5:30 p.m.

Vendor Reception

Location: Crown Foyer

Friday, September 19, 2025

7–10:30 a.m.

Registration Open

Location: Center Concourse

7:30–9 a.m.

Networking Breakfast

Location: DeVos Place Ballroom A

7:30–9 a.m.

Michigan Black Caucus of Local Elected
Officials (MBC-LEO) Breakfast & Membership
Meeting (pre-registration required)

Location: Atrium Room

8–10:30 a.m.

League Membership and Information
Table Open

Location: Center Concourse

9–10 a.m.

Breakout Sessions

Supporting a Strong Local Economy:
Why Small Business Is Critical to
Thriving Communities

Location: Senator Vandenberg Room

Using Pattern Homes to Jumpstart Local
Housing Solutions

Location: Pantlind Ballroom

Planning for Trees: Forestry in a
Municipal Context

Location: Gerald R. Ford Presidential Ballroom

Coordinating Infrastructure Projects Between
Municipalities and Utility Companies

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Crowdfunding 101

Location: Governors Room

10–10:30 a.m.

Networking Break

Location: Center Concourse

10:30 a.m.–12 p.m.

General Session – Beyond Plans and Budgets:
Sparking Change in Real Time &
Announcement of the 2025 Community
Excellence Award Winner

Location: Ambassador Ballroom

General Information



Registration Hours

Wednesday, September 17, 8 a.m.–6 p.m.

Thursday, September 18, 7 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Friday, September 19, 7–10:30 a.m.

League Membership and Information Table

First time at Convention or looking for additional information on League programs and resources? Be sure to visit the League membership and information table located in the Center Concourse. League staff members will be there to provide resources and answer member questions on programs, training, risk management services, and more!

Community Excellence Award

The 2025 winner will be decided by the entire Convention delegation. The four finalists will present their projects on Wednesday, September 17, before the Opening General Session.

Vote for your favorite project/finalist at the voting table in the Center Concourse on Wednesday, September 17, 4–5:30 p.m., and Thursday, September 18, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Voting is also available in the Convention mobile app.

The League's official auditors, Plante Moran PLLC, will oversee the voting booth and count the ballots. The Community Excellence Award Cup will be presented on Friday, September 19, at the Closing General Session.

The 2025 finalists are:

Hart—The HArt Project – Community Spirit Initiative

Negaunee—Negaunee Downtown Enhancement Project

Milford—Central Park: The Heart of Milford

Roscommon—Village of Roscommon receives the first Bird City Michigan designation in the state and activates public art program with Michigan's largest Kirtland's Warbler sculpture in celebration

Thank you to everyone who submitted projects.

Core Legislative Principles

In accordance with the League Bylaws, the Board of Trustees has considered statements of policy in advance of the annual meeting. Clerks from member municipalities were notified in July that the 2025–2026 proposed League Core Legislative Principles were available on the League website. In the Annual Meeting Notice, official voting delegates were requested to print the proposed Core Legislative Principles from the League website and bring them to the Annual Business Meeting on Wednesday at 4:30 p.m. in the Pantlind Ballroom at the Amway Grand Plaza.

Nominating Committee for the Board of Trustees

The Nominating Committee will post the names of nominees for the Board of Trustees in the League registration area on Wednesday afternoon.

Nominating Committee Members

Robert E. Clark, Committee Chairperson, Immediate Past President

Barbara Ziarko, Councilmember, Sterling Heights

Brenda F. Moore, Mayor, Saginaw

Daniel Gilmartin, Executive Director/CEO, Michigan Municipal League

Social Media

Stay connected with all that is going on at Convention and with the League year-round by following the League on LinkedIn, Facebook, X, Instagram, and Bluesky. For the latest Convention updates, be sure to follow #mmlconv.

ICMA Core Competency Credits

The International City/County Management Association (ICMA) offers a voluntary credentialing program to recognize professional local government managers and to promote lifelong learning. To assist managers who are considering or already participating in the program, the League will list one or more of ICMA's 14 core competency (CC) areas for each of the Convention sessions. If you are interested in finding out more about this, contact Kelly Warren at kwarren@mml.org or 734-669-6310.

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Agenda in Detail

Tuesday, September 16, 2025

10 a.m.–12 p.m.	MML Foundation Board of Directors Meeting <i>Location: Miller Canfield Grand Rapids office</i>
2–4:30 p.m.	League Board of Trustees Meeting <i>Location: Gerald R. Ford Presidential Ballroom</i>
6:30–9:30 p.m.	League Board of Trustees Dinner Sponsored by DTE Energy <i>Location: Grand Rapids Art Museum, 101 Monroe Center St. NW Grand Rapids, MI 49503</i>

Wednesday, September 17, 2025

8 a.m.–6 p.m.	Registration Open <i>Location: Center Concourse</i>
9:45 a.m.	Education Tours depart from hotel
10 a.m.–12 p.m.	Education Tours (additional fee and pre-registration required)

Rollin’ on the (Grand) River

Take a stroll along Michigan’s longest river and look at some of the latest developments rising along its banks. The Grand Rapids riverfront will soon include the Acrisure Amphitheater, a state-of-the-art outdoor performing space. You’ll also learn about the upcoming Grand River Greenway (an 85-mile network of public parks and trails along the river’s edge connecting Ottawa and Kent Counties) and the ongoing dam removal to restore the river’s natural rapids—the city’s namesake.

- CC 2: Community Engagement
- CC 7: Strategic Planning
- CC 10: Service Delivery

Agenda in Detail

There's a New Use for That: Building Conversions That Create Housing

Grand Rapids is a leader in housing creation—not only through new construction, but also in transforming older buildings into new homes. This tour showcases several projects that created housing units from underutilized sites. We'll visit a few locations (some of which were featured in the League's House Hacking Policy Brief), including one site in the process of redevelopment. Along the way, our group will discuss current data, why we need a multi-pronged approach to housing, ways to address development costs, and how local officials can champion these housing projects in their own communities.

CC 7: Strategic Planning

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 10: Service Delivery

Community-Led Design: Amplify GR

Join this local nonprofit and learn about their efforts to create a safer, more equitable Grand Rapids. This tour will focus on Amplify GR's community-led revitalization efforts in Boston Square, a neighborhood in the city's southeast. We'll start by visiting their new community center, HUB 07. We'll also discuss Amplify GR's other projects, including two mixed-income, mixed-use housing developments under construction—all of them informed by input from the people who live there.

CC 2: Community Engagement

CC 3: Equity and Inclusion

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

A Greener Grand Rapids

Grand Rapids is leading the way in climate mitigation and adaptation. See examples of the investments the City has made in pursuit of its ambitious climate goals, with particular focus on projects related to stormwater infrastructure and community collaboration. Celebrate the successes of Grand Rapids and learn how you might adapt these lessons to your community's sustainability projects.

CC 2: Community Engagement

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 10: Service Delivery

Frederik Meijer Gardens Tour

This lush, 158-acre park features a Japanese garden and an English perennial garden alongside immaculately maintained trails and water features. Nestled among the walking paths are over 50 large scale sculpture works that include pieces by Auguste Rodin, Ai Weiwei, and Jean Arp, as well as The American Horse, an enormous casting of a design originally by Leonardo da Vinci. Join us for two tours: a 30-minute guided tram tour of the outdoor gardens and a self-guided tour of the indoor gardens. One of the crown jewels of Grand Rapids, the Meijer Gardens are not to be missed!

Agenda in Detail

- 12 p.m.

Education Tours return to hotel
- 12–5:30 p.m.

League Membership and Information Table Open
Location: Center Concourse
- 12:30–1:45 p.m.

Networking Lunch
Location: DeVos Place Ballroom A
- 12:30–1:45 p.m.

First-Time Attendee Lunch
Sponsored by Michigan Planners
(pre-registration required)
Location: Atrium Room

Is this your first Convention, or are you new to the League? This lunch will introduce League staff and board members, and peers who can answer questions about the League and how to make the most of your time at Convention.

- 2–4 p.m.

Opening General Session
Sponsored by Michigan Municipal Executives
Location: Ambassador Ballroom

Community Excellence Award (CEA) Finalist Presentations
Sponsored by Plante Moran
Moderator: Juan Ganum, City Manager, City of Bridgman

“What Did You Think You Were Getting Into?”: The Power and Pitfalls of Leadership
Speaker: Michael McGee, Chair, Michigan Municipal League Foundation Senior Counsel, Miller Canfield

One of Michigan’s preeminent attorneys and a veteran of numerous government roles, Mike McGee has been a leader in municipal circles for decades. In addition to a long and distinguished career that concluded as managing partner of Michigan’s largest law firm, he’s served as a city council member and strategic advisor to communities of all sizes. In this talk, Mike will share insights on the importance of leadership, emphasizing the critical role of local elected officials. Participants will have the opportunity to evaluate their own leadership styles and consider the importance of their roles within their communities and in the wider world.

CC 1: Personal and Professional Integrity
CC 6: Strategic Leadership

- 4–5:30 p.m.

Community Excellence Award Voting
Location: Center Concourse

Agenda in Detail

4–4:30 p.m. Annual Business Meeting Delegate Check-In
Location: Pantlind Foyer

4:30–5:30 p.m. Annual Business Meeting
Location: Pantlind Ballroom

Presiding: League President Don Gerrie, Mayor, Sault Ste. Marie

Adoption of the 2025–2026 Core Legislative Principles and Election of League Trustees

6–8 p.m. Welcome Reception
Location: Ashton Cocktail Lounge, The B.O.B., 20 Monroe Ave. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49503

The Welcome Reception provides an excellent opportunity to catch up with colleagues and create valuable connections. Join us at the Ashton Cocktail Lounge and enjoy food and drinks on the League!

Thursday, September 18, 2025

7 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Registration Open
Location: Center Concourse

7:30–9 a.m. Networking Breakfast
Location: DeVos Place Ballroom A
Start the day off right with breakfast and networking!

7:30–9 a.m. Michigan Association of Mayors (MAM) Annual Meeting & Breakfast
(pre-registration required)
Location: Atrium Room

8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. Community Excellence Award Voting
Location: Center Concourse

8 a.m.–4:30 p.m. League Membership and Information Table Open
Location: Center Concourse

Agenda in Detail

9–10:30 a.m.

General Session

Sponsored by Allen Edwin Homes

Location: Ambassador Ballroom

Redefining Community for People, Place, and Purpose

Speaker: Allyson Brunette, Founder, Allyson Brunette Consulting

Weakened human connection, digital isolation, and poor urban design have all contributed to the fraying of our social fabric. This has negative consequences for both community cohesion and residents’ mental health. As municipal leaders, how can we help reverse this trend? Allyson Brunette, downtown development specialist and “local government whisperer,” will lead a bold discussion about how we can begin to restore our social institutions and foster community connections through revitalizing public spaces, developing offline relationships, and redefining what service looks like in the 21st century.

CC 2: Community Engagement

CC 5: Personal Resiliency and Development

CC 10: Service Delivery

10:30–10:45 a.m.

Networking Break

Location: Center Concourse

10:45–11:45 a.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

A.I., Access, and the Future of Governance: Closing the Tech Gap in Communities

Location: Senator Vandenberg Room

Moderator: Ivery Toussant Jr., Councilmember, City of Harper Woods

Speakers: Michelle Massey, Vice President Community Outreach and
Technical Support, TechSmith
Emmie Musser, Future of Work Strategist, TechSmith
Johnnie Turnage, Co-Founder, Black Tech Saturdays

Artificial intelligence touches everything now, and governments are making policy about (and with) it as we speak. How can communities harness A.I. to improve lives, expand access, and close systemic gaps—rather than deepen them? Hosted by MBC-LEO, this session will spotlight innovation and equity in a compelling and future-focused way. Learn from Black Tech Saturdays and TechSmith about their groundbreaking initiatives and how to make technology decisions that are thoughtful, intentional, and centered on what is most important: people. The future is already here—learn how you can shape it.

CC 3: Equity and Inclusion

CC 8: Policy Facilitation and Implementation

CC 11: Technological Literacy

Agenda in Detail

Thriving Communities for a Thriving Michigan

Location: *Pantlind Ballroom*

Moderator: Michael V. Radtke Jr., Councilmember, City of Sterling Heights

Speakers: Richard Murphy, Sr. Program Manager, Policy Research Labs,
Michigan Municipal League
Herasanna Richards, Legislative Associate, State and Federal Affairs,
Michigan Municipal League
Margaret Mooney, Membership Associate, Michigan Municipal League

The League’s work to promote thriving local communities as a vital part of Michigan’s prosperity continues at multiple scales. Indicators of a “thriving community” include high-quality infrastructure, public health and safety, economic well-being, arts and culture, education access, and housing availability. Come learn about tools your community can use to guide local conversations about strategic priorities and tradeoffs on these indicators, and about the League’s work to benchmark the state of Michigan and make “thriving” a critical part of our advocacy efforts.

CC 7: Strategic Planning

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 10: Service Delivery

Practical Sustainability and Michigan Green Communities Update

Location: *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Ballroom*

Moderator: Christina DeMoore, Councilmember, City of Petoskey

Speakers: Danielle Beard, Special Projects Coordinator, Policy Research Labs,
Michigan Municipal League
Dan Broersma, Author & Sustainability Manager, City of Holland

Holland’s sustainability manager, Dan Broersma, has dedicated two decades to sustainability in the workplace. His curiosity and passion for the field have propelled Holland to become a national leader in sustainability. In his new book, *Practical Sustainability*, Broersma seeks to change the question of, “Should I embrace sustainability in my organization?” into the more fitting, “Why wouldn’t I?” Holland has long been a leader in the Michigan Green Communities (MGC) program, administered by the Michigan Municipal League. Join this session to hear Broersma’s insights, along with “next practices” and useful tools from MGC to embed sustainability into your local government policies and operations. Free copies of *Practical Sustainability* will be available for attendees of this session, but copies are limited!

CC 6: Strategic Leadership

CC 8: Policy Facilitation and Implementation

CC 10: Service Delivery

Agenda in Detail

From Farmer's Markets to Your Table: Municipal Food Policy in Michigan

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Moderator: Andy LeCureaux, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Hazel Park

Speakers: Megan Masson-Minock, Principal, Carlisle|Wortman Associates, Inc.
Amanda Maria Edmonds, Consultant/Owner, Beehive Strategies

Everyone must eat, and yet municipal governments often overlook their role in shaping their local food systems. This session demystifies food policy for communities that don't have dedicated staff or big-city budgets. We'll start with the Michigan Good Food Charter and the role of food policy councils. Then, we'll explore how food shows up—intentionally or not—in zoning codes, permitting, waste systems, and public health planning. Hear the current state of food policy in Michigan and nationwide and discover low- to no-cost procedures you can enact to positively impact sustainable food systems and reduce waste while increasing access and supporting entrepreneurship. There will also be a Q&A to dig into your community's specific food system questions.

CC 8: Policy Facilitation and Implementation

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 10: Service Delivery

Reviving the Corridor: Reimagining Commercial Zones for Housing, Transit, and Community Well-Being

Location: Governors Room

Moderator: Amy Perschbacher, Commissioner, City of Mount Pleasant

Speakers: Ryan Kilpatrick, Founder and CEO, Flywheel Community Development Services
Ryan Schmidt, Partner, Indigo Design + Development

As housing shortages persist across communities of all sizes, planners are increasingly looking to underutilized commercial corridors as untapped opportunities for redevelopment. This session will explore how strategic rezoning and planning of aging or underused commercial corridors can unlock new housing potential while enhancing commercial vitality, improving transit access, and fostering vibrant, mixed-use neighborhoods. We will examine how these corridors can be transformed to support higher residential density alongside placemaking amenities such as public spaces, active transportation infrastructure, and local-serving retail. You'll learn how to assess corridor potential using data-driven approaches and align redevelopment efforts with broader goals including sustainability, equity, and economic resilience.

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 10: Service Delivery

CC 12: Financial Management and Budgeting

Agenda in Detail

- 11:45 a.m.–1 p.m.

Networking Lunch
Location: DeVos Place Ballroom A
- Enjoy lunch with colleagues while discussing what you have learned and what you are looking forward to at Convention.
- 11:45 a.m.–1 p.m.

Michigan Women in Municipal Government (MWIMG) Annual Meeting & Luncheon
(additional fee and pre-registration required)
Location: Atrium Room
- Women Leading Local: A Conversation Circle

Take a break from formal presentations—this session is all about sharing wisdom, sparking ideas, and building connections. In small groups, we'll explore real-time challenges, community wins, and how to better support one another in our work.
- 1–2:30 p.m.

General Session
Sponsored by Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan
Location: Ambassador Ballroom

Mural, Mural on the Wall: Placemaking Through Art

Moderator: Kate Knight, Executive Director, Northville
Downtown Development Authority

Speakers: Mark Washington, City Manager, City of Grand Rapids
Mark Vanderpool, City Manager, City of Sterling Heights
Scott McLennan, Mayor, City of Rogers City

Art is one of many tools that can address challenges and elevate opportunities in communities. Used correctly, public art can create vibrant, inclusive, and resilient spaces that foster creativity and connection in our public squares. This session will highlight real-life examples of how Michigan communities have identified artists and invested in art to drive social, cultural, and economic benefits.

- CC 2: Community Engagement
- CC 9: Community and Resident Service
- CC 10: Service Delivery

- 2:30–2:45 p.m.

Networking Break
Location: Center Concourse

Agenda in Detail

2:45–3:45 p.m.

Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Making Your Community “Child Care Ready”

Location: Senator Vandenberg Room

Moderator: Jennifer Antel, Mayor, City of Wayland

Speakers: Kathy Szenda Wilson, Founder and Co-Executive Director, Pulse at the W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research
Joan Blough, Senior Director, Child Care Innovation Fund, Early Childhood Investment Corporation
Michelle Parkkonen, Managing Director, Technical Assistance Programs, Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Child care availability, cost, and quality are huge challenges for parents and caregivers across Michigan. It impacts workforce participation, small business success, and parental engagement in the community. A new toolkit—designed by leaders experienced in child care policy implementation at both local and statewide levels—is now available to help communities treat child care as the essential part of community infrastructure that it is. Join us for a discussion on actions communities can take to support child care as a vital part of their civic and economic strategy.

CC 8: Policy Facilitation and Implementation

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 10: Service Delivery

Civility in Your Community—Should We Agree to Disagree?

Location: Pantlind Ballroom

Moderator: Amanda Herzog, Commissioner, City of Royal Oak

Speaker: William Mathewson, Legal Consultant, Michigan Municipal League

Public trust can be earned—beginning with local leaders. Lack of civility, whether during council meetings or public interactions, will impact your community. It can even affect a municipality’s ability to attract and retain its elected and appointed officials. Data from the University of Michigan’s Center for Local, State, and Urban Policy (CLOSUP) indicates that our municipal officials are experiencing stress from the lack of civility that seems to permeate all levels of government today. This session will highlight challenges and offer strategies for improving local civility, ethics, and leadership.

CC 1: Personal and Professional Integrity

CC 4: Staff Effectiveness

CC 5: Personal Resiliency and Development

CC 13: Human Resources Management and Workforce Engagement

Agenda in Detail

Creative Storm Water Management in the City of Grand Rapids

Location: *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Ballroom*

Moderator: Robert Monetza, Mayor, City of Grand Haven

Speaker: Daniel Taber, Stormwater Manager, City of Grand Rapids

As we see more frequent and higher rainfall each year, many Michigan communities need different (and better) stormwater management systems. Investing in green or grey infrastructure isn't a small decision. This session highlights how the City of Grand Rapids has successfully used advanced stormwater management techniques while prioritizing neighborhoods at greatest risk of flooding and other environmental and socioeconomic stressors. Learn more about the innovative ways the city has pursued its sustainability to drive smarter infrastructure decisions.

CC 7: Strategic Planning

CC 10: Service Delivery

CC 12: Financial Management and Budgeting

Steadying the Ship: Smart Budgeting Strategies for Uncertain Times

Presented by Business Alliance Program Participant Rehmann

Location: *Imperial Ballroom*

Moderator: Judy Priestley, Councilmember, City of Flint

Speakers: Rachel Frisch, Senior Manager, Rehmann
Dan Merritt, Principal, Rehmann

Economic uncertainty can send ripples through local government budgets. This presentation will help officials develop resilient budgeting practices that balance increasing demands with finite resources. Through real-life examples and professional expertise, learn innovative and practical strategies to prioritize critical services and financial sustainability. Whether you're navigating an economic downturn or unexpected crisis, or simply planning ahead, this session will provide the tools you need to budget effectively—even in the face of unpredictable challenges.

CC 10: Service Delivery

CC 12: Financial Management and Budgeting

Agenda in Detail

Legislative Update

Location: Governors Room

Moderator: Emily Bauman, Councilmember, City of Westland

Speakers: John LaMacchia II, Director, State and Federal Affairs,
Michigan Municipal League

Jennifer Rigterink, Assistant Director, State and Federal Affairs,
Michigan Municipal League

Herasanna Richards, Legislative Associate, State and Federal Affairs,
Michigan Municipal League

Dave Hodgkins, Legislative Associate, State and Federal Affairs,
Michigan Municipal League

From the passage of the state budget to discussions on road funding, housing, and economic development, the legislature continues to tackle issues facing local government. Our lobbying team will break it all down for you and offer insights on what legislation is likely to see action and, more importantly, how you can engage!

CC 8: Policy Facilitation and Implementation

CC 10: Service Delivery

4–5:30 p.m.

Vendor Reception

Sponsored by 123.net, Allen Edwin Homes, Avila, Crimson, Fleis & VandenBrink, Global Solutions Group, McKenna, MERS, OHM, Pine Rest Employee Assistance Program, SAFEbuilt, Social News Desk, Throne Labs Spicer Group, Inc., The Brick Industry Association,

Location: Crown Foyer

Join us at the Vendor Reception! Convention attendees, organizations, and companies can mingle and create connections that benefit Michigan communities.

Agenda in Detail

Friday, September 19, 2025

7–10:30 a.m.	Registration Open <i>Location: Center Concourse</i>
7:30–9 a.m.	Networking Breakfast <i>Location: DeVos Place Ballroom A</i> Start the day off right with breakfast and networking!
7:30–9 a.m.	Michigan Black Caucus of Local Elected Officials (MBC-LEO) Breakfast & Membership Meeting (pre-registration required) <i>Location: Atrium Room</i>
8–10:30 a.m.	League Membership and Information Table Open <i>Location: Center Concourse</i>
9–10 a.m.	Concurrent Breakout Sessions

Supporting a Strong Local Economy: Why Small Business Is Critical to Thriving Communities

Location: Senator Vandenberg Room

Moderator: Brandon Kolo, Commissioner, City of Royal Oak
Speakers: Julie Burrell, Senior Economic Development Director, The Right Place
Scott Adkins, Special Projects Administrator, City of Marine City
Melvin Eledge, Director of Operations, Downtown Grand Rapids Inc.
Camille Steverson, Co-Owner, Seconds Vibess

Small business entrepreneurs are critical players in communities’ economic vitality. They provide a sizable portion of local jobs, keep money circulating locally, add diversity and resilience, and are an important part of the local social scene. Municipalities play a key role in supporting small businesses and entrepreneurs—whether it’s providing high-quality and appropriate physical space, connecting them to local networks, or simply fostering a desirable neighborhood to drive foot traffic. Hear from local leaders, business support organizations, and small businesses about how to successfully build strong, vibrant, thriving local economies.

- CC 2: Community Engagement
- CC 3: Equity and Inclusion
- CC 12: Financial Management and Budgeting

Agenda in Detail

Using Pattern Homes to Jumpstart Local Housing Solutions

Location: *Pantlind Ballroom*

Moderator: Marty Chambers, Mayor Pro Tem, City of Lowell

Speakers: Cory Mays, Grant Coordinator, City of Jackson
Christina Anderson, Deputy Director, City Planner, Community Planning & Economic Development, City of Kalamazoo
Richard Murphy, Sr. Program Manager, Policy Research Labs, Michigan Municipal League

Pattern home programs can allow for faster permitting and lower design costs while being more financially accessible to residents, but many communities struggle to move from interest to implementation. This session will dive into existing models of pre-reviewed housing plans, where you'll learn from case studies of Michigan communities that have rolled out local programs and are getting homes built. We'll also discuss the League's Pattern Book Homes for 21st Century Michigan publication and initiative. Whatever your community's housing needs may be, this session will offer practical steps to move from idea to impact.

CC 8: Policy Facilitation and Implementation

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 10: Service Delivery

Planning for Trees: Forestry in a Municipal Context

Location: *Gerald R. Ford Presidential Ballroom*

Moderator: Joseph Chin Jr., Councilmember, City of Charlotte

Speakers: Zach Michels, Associate Planner, Charter Township of Canton
Joe Sulak, Parks Superintendent, City of Grand Rapids

Trees can beautify neighborhoods, mitigate heat islands, reduce A/C bills, and contribute to stormwater management—among many other benefits. However, poorly designed tree policies can cause problems for both infrastructure and private land development. This session explores the role of tree policy in shaping sustainable, equitable communities. Whether you're rethinking your local ordinance or planning for climate resilience, this session will help your community develop strategies rooted (no pun intended) in strong local policy.

CC 7: Strategic Planning

CC 8: Policy Facilitation and Implementation

Agenda in Detail

Coordinating Infrastructure Projects Between Municipalities and Utility Companies

Presented by Business Alliance Program Participant DTE Energy

Location: Imperial Ballroom

Moderator: Harry Burdett Jr., Mayor, City of Springfield

Speakers: Barbara Rykwalder, Regional Manager, DTE Energy

Julie Jozwiak, Regional Manager, DTE Energy

Stephen Kepley, Mayor, City of Kentwood

Asset management and infrastructure project coordination are priority focuses for utility companies, municipalities, and the state. Recently, DTE released an innovative tool to help municipal partners and the public with a more visual understanding of ongoing and planned investments. At the same time, the State of Michigan is developing its own tool, called MI DIG, to assist with coordination of projects. In this session, you'll hear from other communities about how they approach coordination with their utility partners. You'll also learn how to use these new tools in your municipal infrastructure planning and provide prompt and useful communication about project plans with your residents.

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 10: Service Delivery

CC 12: Financial Management and Budgeting

Crowdfunding 101

Location: Governors Room

Moderator: Larry Moss, City Councilor, City of Greenville

Speakers: Mahala Clayton, Michigan Director, Patronicity

Paula Holtz, Managing Director, Regional Development, Michigan Economic Development Corporation

Crowdfunding is when individuals contribute small amounts of money to support a project. With large-scale funding sources more uncertain than ever, civic crowdfunding can help communities move projects from dream to reality. This session introduces crowdfunding as a practical strategy to increase buy-in (literally) to public spaces, placemaking initiatives, and more. Learn from successful campaigns supported through platforms like Patronicity and the MEDC's Public Spaces Community Places initiative. From structuring your campaign to engaging residents, we'll walk through best practices, challenges, and lessons learned. Whether you're renovating a library, commissioning an art installation, or building a pickleball court, there's power in the crowd—learn how to harness it!

CC 2: Community Engagement

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 12: Financial Management and Budgeting

Agenda in Detail

10–10:30 a.m. Networking Break
Location: Center Concourse

10:30 a.m.–12 p.m. **Closing General Session**

Announcement of the 2025 Community Excellence Award Winner

Location: Ambassador Ballroom

Beyond Plans and Budgets: Sparking Change in Real Time

Speaker: Jon Jon Wesolowski, National Speaker & Educator,
The Happy Urbanist

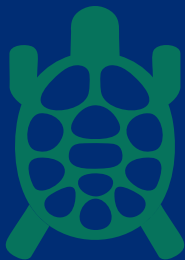
Cities across Michigan face the same challenge: How do we improve our streets and public spaces without waiting years for studies, funding, or construction? Action—not perfection—is the path to stronger, more resilient communities. Small, quick, low-cost ideas can make a big difference, whether it’s pop-up parks, daylighted intersections, or creative street redesigns that make neighborhoods safer and more people-centered. In this session, community advocate Jon Jon Wesolowski will share examples of how residents and officials across the country are using fast, flexible placemaking to cut through red tape, test new ideas, and build momentum for lasting change.

CC 2: Community Engagement

CC 8: Policy Facilitation and Implementation

CC 9: Community and Resident Service

CC 14: Communication and Information Sharing



BLOGS



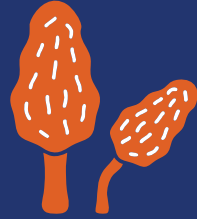
INSIDE208

Timely updates from the League's State and Federal Affairs team, delivered straight to your inbox. Day or night—you've got a friend in Lansing.



PEOPLE & PLACE

Behind the scenes with people who are reimagining the possible and doing transformative work because they love where they live.



LEAGUE ONLINE LEARNING

LEARN WITH THE LEAGUE: ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

Our new online learning platform brings the League's training to your home, office, or wherever you need it. Courses now available:

- Lobbying for Local Leaders
- Thriving Communities 101
- Local Government 101
- FOIA & OMA Essentials
- Ethics, Civility, and Public Leadership
- Strategic Insights for Local Government Finance
- Unlocking Michigan's Housing Potential





2025 Award Winners

Honorary Life Member Award

Honorary Life Membership, first awarded in 1932, is the League's highest honor, reserved for the most active and inspiring leaders dedicated to the League and its mission.

Recipient: **Melanie Piana**



Melanie Piana has devoted her career to building more inclusive and equitable communities through public service. As mayor of Ferndale and a city council member for 14 years, she led bold efforts to create welcoming places for people and invest in long-term climate resilience. She believes that strong, transparent, and accountable local leadership is essential to building a connected and responsive government. Her leadership helped Ferndale build safer streets, creating lasting collaborations with neighboring cities to solve shared mobility challenges. Piana continues her public service at the Regional Transit Authority of Southeast Michigan, where she advances regional transit improvements that connect people to jobs, education, and opportunity. A trusted collaborator, mentor, and coalition builder, Piana brings vision and tenacity to every challenge she takes on.

What does the Honorary Life Member Award mean to you?

"MML has been instrumental in shaping my impact as a public servant. Its nurturing support, forward-thinking expertise, and commitment to bringing elected officials together to learn from one another are what make this organization so special. MML helped me grow as a leader. Their team provided me with the tools to navigate the hard, often messy work of local governance and learn from my mistakes. I'm incredibly honored to receive this recognition. Thank you, MML, for being a steady source of inspiration, connection, and purpose throughout my elected journey."

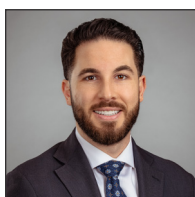


2025 Award Winners

Community Builder Award

Honoring individuals whose leadership creates positive community change. Through efforts such as encouraging civic engagement, supporting up-and-coming leaders, fostering good working relationships, and thinking strategically, they make their community a place where people truly love to live and work.

Recipient: **Abdullah Hammoud**



Throughout his career, Abdullah Hammoud has put people first. The proud son of immigrant parents, he has been an unwavering advocate for his hometown of Dearborn as the city's seventh mayor. Since the start of his tenure in 2022, he has championed efforts to improve City services. During his first year in office, Mayor Hammoud introduced policy reforms for

Dearborn's youngest residents, including waiving poll tag fees for those 14 years of age and younger. In 2023, Dearborn launched the PEACE Park initiative, a \$32 million grant allocation to enrich parks and greenspaces while constructing three new public parks across the city. Under Mayor Hammoud's leadership, the City established three new departments: Public Health, Philanthropy & Grants, and Community Relations.

What does the Community Builder Award mean to you?

"Receiving the Community Building Award is a profound honor, and I accept it on behalf of the people of Dearborn who inspire me every day. It reaffirms my belief that real progress is made through collaboration, compassion, and empowering every resident to have a voice in shaping our future. This recognition motivates me to continue leading with purpose and a steadfast commitment to building a stronger, more inclusive community for all."



2025 Award Winners

Michael A. Guido Leadership and Public Service Award

Celebrating a chief elected official who personifies professionalism and leadership, is an active League member, is dedicated to the citizens in their community, and advocates on their behalf in Lansing and Washington, D.C.

Recipient: **Robert E. Clark**

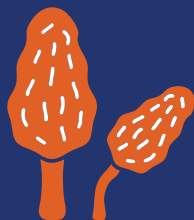


For 16 years, Mayor Clark has dedicated himself to strengthening Monroe's governance, economic development, and community partnerships, becoming its longest-serving mayor. He has contributed to many local boards and commissions, representing Monroe's interests regionally and statewide. Mayor Clark has been involved with the Michigan Association of Mayors since 2019 and currently serves as Board President. He is equally engaged with the Southeast Michigan Council of Government, serving as Executive Committee Delegate and Chairperson in 2017.

Locally, Mayor Clark serves on the River Raisin National Battlefield Park Foundation Board and the Monroe International Friendship Association, helping to foster international ties through the city's Sister City relationship and student exchange program. His years of service reflect a steadfast commitment to collaboration, growth, and Monroe's future.

What does the Michael A. Guido Leadership and Public Service Award mean to you?

"It is an honor to be recognized by the Michigan Municipal League and peer municipal leaders for this prestigious award. Service to our communities is best achieved through relationships, partnerships, and a collective vision. I am blessed to work with the finest leadership team, employees, and community volunteers that tirelessly work together in our service and shared success; I proudly share this moment with them."



2025 Award Winners

Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award

Celebrating a person dedicated to public service who has shown passion and commitment to the League, enthusiastically supporting its mission and promoting its purpose.

Recipient: **Edward Klobucher**



Edward Klobucher has been City Manager of Hazel Park since 2002. A lifelong resident of Hazel Park, he began working for the City's recreation department while still in high school. Before returning to Hazel Park in 2000 as Assistant City Manager, he worked in law enforcement, administering mental health treatment programs for the criminal justice system. As City Manager, he has served on the Board of Directors of the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Employee Retirement System, the Michigan Suburbs Alliance, and was appointed a member of the 2013 Michigan Treasurer's Task Force on Municipal Finance Reform. Mr. Klobucher is also president of the Hazel Park Promise Zone Board.

What does the Jim Sinclair Exceptional Service Award mean to you?

"I am deeply honored to receive the Jim Sinclair award for service to the Michigan Municipal League. Every city public official, appointed or elected, should be active in the MML. Whether they are lobbying to protect the interests of cities, or proposing innovative, future-oriented ideas to help our cities thrive and improve the quality of life for our residents, the Michigan Municipal League is by far the most important organization of its kind in the state of Michigan. The League's value to the City of Hazel Park cannot be overstated!"

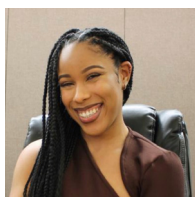


2025 Award Winners

Emerging Leader Award

Honoring a local government leader under the age of 40 who demonstrates leadership excellence, embodies League values, and serves as an inspiration to others in the field.

Recipient: Jenasia Morris



Commissioner Jenasia Morris leads with heart, believing that lasting change begins with the people who care enough to act. A proud lifelong resident of Battle Creek's Washington Heights neighborhood and a passionate advocate for her community, she made history at age 21 as the youngest person ever elected to the City Commission. Now in her third term representing Ward 2, Jenasia has worked to build trust between police and the community, increase government transparency government, and expand youth opportunities. She supports students daily at Battle Creek Central High School and chairs the Washington Heights Hub of Hope. A former MBC-LEO secretary, she is also a member of Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church, where her faith keeps her grounded.

What does the Emerging Leader Award mean to you?

"Receiving the MML Emerging Leadership Award is a humbling and meaningful honor, especially in a field like public service that can often feel thankless. I'm truly grateful to be recognized among so many dedicated public servants. This award makes me feel seen and appreciated for the work I do, and it reminds me of the responsibility I carry to continue serving my community with compassion, integrity, and care. I'm deeply thankful to everyone who has supported and believed in me along the way, and I'm inspired to pave the way for the next generation of leaders who will come behind me."

Future League Events

2025

Date	Event	Location
December 4	Newly Elected Officials Training	Lansing

2026

Date	Event	Location
January 22	Newly Elected Officials Training	Virtual
February 7	Newly Elected Officials Training	Virtual
February 20–21	Elected Officials Academy Winter Summit	Virtual
March 10–11	CapCon 2026	Lansing
May 15–16	Elected Officials Academy Spring Summit	Bay City
October 7–9	Convention 2026	Traverse City



CAP
CON
2026

Save the Date

March 10–11, 2026 | Lansing Center, MI
Michigan Municipal League CapCon 2026

