

# Montana League of Cities and Towns 2022 Strategic Plan



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Approved by:  
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# Montana League of Cities and Towns

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## **Mission Statement**

Montana League of Cities and Towns provides resources and advocacy to build and maintain unique, vibrant, healthy, and safe communities for its members.

## **Vision Statement**

The Montana League of Cities and Towns – Empowering and guiding Montana communities to enhance the quality of life for all Montanans.

## **Historical Background**

The Montana League of Cities and Towns (the League) is an incorporated, nonpartisan, nonprofit association of 127 Montana municipalities. Organized under a constitution originally adopted in 1931, the sole purpose of the League is to promote and improve performance among municipal governments in Montana. The League acts as the clearinghouse through which Montana cities and towns collaborate for their mutual benefit.

Major policies are determined by vote of the delegates at the annual conference, overseen by an 18-member governing body elected and appointed from among the city and town delegates, and implemented by League staff. The League serves as an advisory body to facilitate contact between municipal officials and state and federal agencies, provides advocacy on policies affecting municipalities at the state and federal levels, and provides training and resources to help its members operate efficient and effective municipalities. By cooperating through the League, Montana municipalities provide for themselves an ongoing research program and a consistent legislative voice that would be impossible for members to achieve individually.

## **Core Operational Values**

- *Local Decision-making*
  - Empowering cities and towns to make decisions locally
- *Advocacy*
  - Local, state, and national level
  - *Collaboration* Leverage resources through teamwork and building coalitions
- *Transparency*
  - Openness, communication, and accountability to all members
- *Fiscal Responsibility*
  - Utilizing a diversified revenue model
- *Respect*
  - Preserving, promoting, and valuing civility and differing perspectives

# Organizational Goals

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## 1. Advocacy & Government Services

- Through effective strategic partnerships, the League will promote and improve performance among municipal governments in Montana by serving as a clearinghouse through which Montana cities and towns collaborate for their mutual benefit.
- The League will continue to strengthen its relationships with MMIA and others – NLC, MACo, MIC, LGC, and private sector partners and organizations.
- Representing Montana cities and towns at all levels of government, the League will promote local decision-making, innovation, and policies that support healthy, safe, and resilient communities.

## 2. Member Services

- Through effective strategic partnerships, the League will provide technical assistance, education/support, and research/analysis to our members. These services will be provided on a day-to-day basis, at annual conference, and at district and other meetings.
- The League will provide direct financial, legal, information technology, grant writing, communications, human resources, and other services to our members on a reduced cost basis enabled through a combination of dues, grants, and fees.

## 3. Communication

- Seek opportunities to build League's capacity for long term sustainable growth by leveraging strategic partnerships and effectively communicating the League's ongoing work on behalf of members.
- Grow capacity and opportunities for timely and effectively communicating information, news, advocacy efforts, policy initiatives, grant opportunities, etc. to members.
- Develop the League's brand and narrative to the public, external stakeholders, state and federal agencies, and legislators to capitalize on and strengthen the reputation and voice of Montana's cities and towns.

## 4. Organizational Structure

- Develop capacity and financial ability to enhance advocacy, legal, and communication within the MLCT to more effectively serve our members.
  - Advisory Committees for communication, member services, and funding/development.
  - Huge issue with travel and hotels – we made money with conference in past and now might not be a good model.
  - Building a bench for the Board – succession planning; requirement for district representatives to do district outreach; board meetings bring others to the meetings; help bring non-members into the process early to see how the board works and operates
  - Conversation about dues and discussion about 100% membership.

# Strategic Plan Summary

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## Organizational Goals (Blue Boxes) and Strategies (White Boxes):

1. Advocacy & Government Services	2. Member Services	3. Communication	4. Organizational Structure
Enhance the League's advocacy presence across all sectors.	Review options to build capacity and resources to more effectively provide assistance in legal, management, personnel, and other disciplines, provide education, and build capacity.	Build permanent internal and external communications capacity to enhance participation of League members.	Enhance the Board's ability to effectively govern the organization.
	Create a culture of partnership and continual improvement with the annual conference and district meetings to enhance the quality and effectiveness for our members.	Explore opportunities to enhance the League's profile.	Evaluate resource needs to meet the desired services of the membership.
			Effectively administer the affairs of the League.

# Strategic Plan (Goals 1-4)

## **Organizational Goal 1: Advocacy & Governmental Services**

Through effective strategic partnerships, the League will promote and improve performance among municipal governments in Montana by serving as a clearinghouse through which Montana cities and towns collaborate for their mutual benefit.

The League will continue to strengthen its relationships with MMIA and others – NLC, MACo, MIC, LGC, and private sector partners and organizations.

Representing Montana cities and towns at all levels of government, the League will promote local decision-making, innovation, and policies that support healthy, safe, and resilient communities.

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Enhance the League's advocacy presence across all sectors.	Action A: Elected officials/executive director participate as active members in the NLC.	Budget/Board	1-5	Ongoing
	Action B: Provide technical assistance, technology, and training to enhance board and member participation and engagement with legislators and legislative proposals.	Budget	1-5	Ongoing
	Action C: Implement Board's decision to increase capacity in advocacy services.	Staff	1	In Process
	Action D: Continue to build and maintain our strategic partnerships with Montana Infrastructure Coalition and other public and private sector partners to achieve our advocacy goals.	Board/ Committee/ Staff	1-5	Ongoing
	Action E: Represent members at legislature and with state and federal agencies.	Board/ Committee/ Staff	1-5	Ongoing
	Action F: Explore resources necessary and options available to enhance advocacy strategy (e.g., Engagifii, service level agreement).	Budget	1	In Process

## **Organizational Goal 2: Member Services**

Through effective strategic partnerships, the League will provide technical assistance, education/support, and research/analysis to our members. These services will be provided on a day- to-day basis, at annual conference, and at district and other meetings.

The League will provide direct financial, legal, information technology, grant writing, communications, human resources, and other services to our members on a reduced cost basis enabled through a combination of dues, grants, and fees.

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Review capacity and resources to more effectively provide assistance in legal, management, personnel, and other disciplines, provide education, and build capacity.	Action A: Pilot League and MMIA collaboration to provide direct member financial and accounting services. Evaluate options for provision of services and resources available to create self-sustaining program.	Budget/Staff	1-2	In Process
	Action B: Utilize financial and accounting services model to create member services in legal, management, personnel, grant writing, IT, and other areas.	Budget	2-5	Ongoing
Create a culture of partnership and continual improvement to provide value-added professional services that enhance the quality and effectiveness of our members.	Action A: Collaborate with the Board and other strategic partners to create goals for the League conference.	Staff/Budget	1-5	Ongoing
	Action B: Collaborate with strategic partners and the membership to determine current issues of importance and agenda items for regional summit meetings.	Staff/Budget/ Board	1-5	Ongoing
	Action C: Determine opportunities to assess other value-added services that will benefit members.	Staff/Budget/ Board	1-5	Ongoing

### **Organizational Goal 3: Communication**

Seek opportunities to build the League’s capacity for long term sustainable growth by leveraging strategic partnerships and effectively communicating the League’s ongoing work on behalf of members.

Grow capacity and opportunities for timely and effectively communicating information, news, advocacy efforts, policy initiatives, grant opportunities, etc. to our members.

Develop the League’s brand and narrative for the public, external stakeholders, state and federal agencies, and legislators to capitalize on and strengthen the reputation and voice of Montana’s cities and towns.

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Build permanent internal and external communications capacity to enhance participation of League members.	Action A: Create a more structured process to better engaging members on current League activities and issues (e.g., Engagifii, expanded communication capability, newsletter, weekly bulletin, social media).	Staff/Budget	1-5	Ongoing
	Action B: Develop and implement a League and MMIA strategic communications plan.	Staff (new communication strategist)/Budget	1-5	Ongoing
	Action C: Provide outreach through summit and other meetings to engage and strengthen relationships with legislators and other strategic partners with the League.	Staff/Budget/Board	1-5	Ongoing
	Action D: Quarterly planning meetings between executive directors of the MLCT, MMIA, MACO, and LGC.	Staff	1-5	Not started
	Action E: To modernize communication tools, including the website, social media, League app, etc., to increase visibility and communication with our members and external groups	Staff/Budget	1-2	In Process
Explore opportunities to enhance the League’s profile.	Action A: Enhance the League brand and investigate joint branding opportunities between the League and MMIA.	Staff/Budget	1-2	In Process

## **Organizational Goal 4: Organizational Structure**

Work with strategic partners to develop enhanced advocacy, legal, and communication capacity within the League to more effectively serve our members.

<b>STRATEGY</b>	<b>ACTION</b>	<b>RESOURCES</b>	<b>YEAR</b>	<b>STATUS</b>
Enhance the Board's ability to effectively govern the organization.	Action A: The Board will meet four times a year in person or by phone.	Staff/Budget	1-5	Ongoing
	Action B: Conduct a strategic planning meeting every two years.	Staff/Budget	1-5	Ongoing
	Action C: Develop strategies to improve board participation in board meetings and advocacy issues (e.g., Engagifii and BoardPaq).	Staff/Board/Membership	1-5	Ongoing
	Action D: Develop a succession plan for Board members.	Staff/Board	1	Ongoing
Evaluate resource needs to meet the desired services of the membership.	Action A: Evaluate the League's resources and capacity to fulfill our responsibility in achieving the defined strategy.	Staff/Board	1-5	Ongoing
	Action B: Continue to build and maintain our strategic partnerships with public and private sector partners to achieve member goals.	Staff/Board	1-5	Ongoing
Effectively administer the affairs of the League.	Action A: Manage all fiscal matters.	Staff	1-5	Ongoing
	Action B: Coordinate with staff, contractors, and other professionals as needed.	Staff	1-5	Ongoing