



# 2004 Municipal Policy Statement

**Legislative Advocacy on Behalf of  
Arizona Cities and Towns**



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## INTRODUCTION

The League of Arizona Cities and Towns presents its 2004 Municipal Policy Statement, which contains policy positions and action items that were collaboratively chosen by Arizona's 87 cities and towns. We invite you to review this document to better understand the issues that Arizona's municipalities have selected for discussion and action within their communities, at the State Capitol and in Congress. Please do not hesitate to contact a member of the League staff if you would like more information about any of the issues contained in the Policy Statement. We look forward to working with you to accomplish these priorities.

## 2004 CORE PRINCIPLES

The League's legislative policies are guided by two core principles that reflect the partnership between state and local government. These principles form the backbone of the League's legislative program.

### State Shared Revenue

Arizona voters chose, through a series of initiatives, to return a portion of tax revenues back to local communities through state shared revenue. This is provided to municipalities in exchange for losses in local taxing authority such as income and luxury taxes. This system supports local choice and self-government by allowing city and town councils across



the state to decide how tax dollars are spent within the community. State shared revenue funds the

basic services that citizens count on such as police and fire protection, streets, courts, parks and libraries. With these vital services in mind, the League urges the Legislature to retain state shared revenue to assure adequate local community services in response to local needs.

### **Local Control**

Cities and towns are voluntarily created by the residents of a community to provide local self-government and services, which allows Arizona's cities and towns to embody the diversity of the State of Arizona. The only way that Arizona's cities and towns can fully serve their unique constituencies is through allowing local governing bodies the freedom to make decisions at a local level that best meet the needs of the community. Thus, the League urges the Legislature to oppose efforts to erode local control and authority through preemptions and mandates.

## **2004 PRIORITY RESOLUTIONS**

Each year, the League's membership selects five priority resolutions for the upcoming legislative session. Designation as a priority resolution means that the issue will receive special emphasis in the League's legislative program. This year's priorities reflect the wide range of issues that affect municipalities in the state.

### **The League of Arizona Cities and Towns:**

- Urges the Legislature to retain state shared revenue to cities and towns.
- Urges the Legislature and the Governor to enact corrective legislation rescinding the FY2003/2004 budget provisions that divert revenue generated from local courts' collection of fines and fees to the state General Fund.

- Urges Arizona's Congressional Delegation, the Governor, Legislature, State Committees and Agencies, and local governments to maintain and develop policies that preserve the mission viability of Arizona's military facilities by limiting encroachment of all types, supporting compatible land uses around such facilities and ensuring the capability for future mission expansions.
- Urges the Legislature to propose an amendment to the Constitution providing for an increase in the number of required signatures for a recall election.
- Urges the Legislature to increase the options available to municipalities with a population of 50,000 or less when calculating the number of signatures required to call a referendum challenging the recent passage of an ordinance, franchise, or resolution.



## 2004 RESOLUTIONS



### GENERAL GOVERNMENT

#### The League of Arizona Cities and Towns:

- Urges the Legislature to amend A.R.S. § 16-661A to permit automatic recounts in municipalities when the vote margin does not exceed one-tenth of one per cent of the number of votes cast for both candidates or measures, or the vote margin does not exceed 10 votes.

- Urges the Legislature to clarify that an entity that is created in whole or in part by political subdivisions and whose membership is composed in whole or in part of political subdivisions which performs governmental-related services is eligible to participate in the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS).



- Urges the Legislature to amend A.R.S. Title 34 to allow cities and towns to adopt alternative procedures in hiring certain professionals (e.g., engineers, architects).



## FISCAL POLICY

### **The League of Arizona Cities and Towns:**

- Urges that when proposing changes to Arizona's fiscal and tax policies, the Governor's Citizens' Finance Review Commission (CFRC) and the Legislature place a high priority on the preservation and enhancement of the abilities of cities and towns to serve our citizens by retaining local decision making authority and maintaining fiscally balanced revenue sources.
- Urges the Legislature to authorize border cities to include one-half of its average daily number of border crossers in the city's population estimate for calculating the city's expenditure limit.

- Urges the Legislature to enact legislation and or policies that would allow cities and towns to recoup the cost of responding to arson calls from those responsible for the arson.
- Urges the Legislature to expand A.R.S. §28-1386, regarding the assessment of expenses for an emergency response to an accident involving DUI against the convicted offender, by increasing the limit from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per accident and to adopt similar provisions for emergency response to reckless driving, criminal speeding and other criminal traffic violations.



- Urges the Legislature to maintain the original funding levels and usage of the Arizona Heritage Fund, including dedicated funding from the State Lottery monies.
- Urges the Legislature to review how state and federal transportation funds are budgeted and allocated for Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) landscape maintenance and litter collection to ensure these activities are adequately addressed.



## COMMUNITY PLANNING

### **The League of Arizona Cities and Towns:**

- Urges the Legislature to enact legislation that would reduce the requirements placed on municipalities when annexing unincorporated communities including county enclaves.

- Urges the Legislature to amend the annexation statutes regarding statutory criteria for contiguity with provisions for distance limits and right of rejection by adjacent communities.
- Urges the Legislature to grant local communities the authority to ask voters to extend existing revenue sources or implement other measures to raise funds for transportation purposes.
- Urges the Legislature to support and approve the extension of the 1/2 cent transportation sales tax for an additional 20 years for Maricopa County by allowing the issue to go to the ballot.



- Urges the Legislature to pass legislation giving local governments including cities, towns and counties more discretion to take into consideration the availability of water resources in both planning and permitting development within their jurisdictions.



## **PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY**

### **The League of Arizona Cities and Towns:**

- Urges the Legislature to address the ongoing problems communities face with sex offenders by prohibiting registered sex offenders on probation from living in the same residential structure and/or establishing additional oversight for group home operators that house registered sex offenders on probation.

- Urges the Legislature to support the Governor's efforts to reform the State's Child Protective Service Agency.
- Urges the Legislature to make numerous changes to state liquor laws enhancing the ability of municipalities to address community-related problems associated with liquor establishments.



## COMMUNITY CONCERNS

### **The League of Arizona Cities and Towns:**

- Urges the Legislature to protect short-term loan consumers by modifying existing banking laws regulating deferred presentment companies (pay day lenders) to reduce the number of roll-overs allowed, require a waiting period between loans and expand disclosure requirements.



- Urges the Legislature to enact legislation that would discourage the practice of predatory mortgage lending.



### The League of Arizona Cities and Towns:

- Urges Congress to provide more federal resource for affordable housing, specifically to preserve the current Housing Choice Voucher as the funding mechanism for rental assistance to local housing agencies and to reject the block granting of rental assistance.



- Urges Congress to provide funding for cities and towns to comply with new arsenic standards.
- Urges Congress to fully fund federal recreation and conservation programs, such as the Land and Water Conservation Fund, for state and local government conservation and recreation programs.
- Urges Congress to develop a viable Guest Worker Program.
- Urges Congress to oppose provisions in the federal Head Start Reauthorization bill to remove local control and grant state authority to administer the program.

## POLICY GUIDELINES

The League of Arizona Cities and Towns was founded to defend the principle that local decisions are best made by local decision makers and not by another level of government. Since cities and towns are voluntarily created by the people of a community to provide local self-government and services, each municipality acting through its elected governing body is entitled to freedom for purposes of self-government and local determination.

Local decision making encompasses all aspects of municipal living, including the provision of basic services. Ultimately, these decisions embody the common values and aspirations of the residents of cities and towns in Arizona. In addition to basic services, there are quality of life issues - a clean environment, a superior educational system, the safety of citizens to be free from violence, adequate social service programs and the preservation of our natural amenities for future generations, which are critical to the growth and maintenance of viable communities.

In the spirit of preserving and enhancing local decision making, the following are the policies that guide the legislative program of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns:

- The right to exercise local self-determination is the cornerstone of municipal policy and serves to strengthen and perpetuate our federal system of government. Any attempts to preempt local authority will be opposed.
- Incorporated city and town governments are the best vehicle for providing the people with responsible local government and services.
- The diversity of problems and needs in Arizona communities requires flexibility in legislation so that local officials can meet those unique

needs and problems in the context of each city or town.

- Neither Congress nor the Arizona Legislature should mandate programs and services upon cities and towns without commensurate funding.
- Attempts to limit local taxing authority or to mandate state collection of local taxes should be opposed.
- State collected, locally shared revenues should be maintained and any reduction, whether directly through the elimination of such revenues, or indirectly, through the exemption of certain classes of property or activities from the application of taxes, should be opposed, unless other equal revenue sources are made available to local government.
- The necessary authority to adequately manage the urban environment is critical to meeting the demands of urban growth. The police power must remain as the basis for local planning and zoning.
- The concept and use of joint exercise of powers agreements in the fostering of intergovernmental cooperation among all levels of government are strongly supported.
- The continued authority of local government to effectively manage its employees through local personnel policies is appropriate. Any proposed mandating of specific personnel practices for local employees or selected groups of employees should be opposed.
- The development of an adequate and safe transportation system to meet the needs of our rapidly growing population is of significant importance to all levels of government in Arizona.

## LEAGUE GOVERNANCE AND POLICY

Founded in 1937, the League of Arizona Cities and Towns is owned, financed and governed by its municipal members and exists to promote local self-government and municipal independence. The League provides a variety of services that assist cities and towns in meeting the needs of their citizens, including the provision of training, research, technical code and ordinance assistance, innovative forums, conferences, informative publications and online services. In addition, the League represents, and advocates for, the collective interests of Arizona's 87 cities and towns at the state and federal levels of government. League policy is developed through a resolutions process at the Annual Conference. Each mayor, or the councilmember that he or she designates, is invited to participate in the Resolutions Committee. Once the policy has been developed, the entire membership votes and adopts a Municipal Policy Statement to guide the League's policies and lobbying efforts for the coming Legislative Session.

The League's goals and objectives are directed by a 25 member Executive Committee consisting of mayors and councilmembers from across the State who are elected to two year terms by the entire membership at the Annual Conference.



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