



# 2013 MUNICIPAL POLICY STATEMENT



## CORE PRINCIPLES

The League of Arizona Cities and Towns, a voluntary membership organization of the 91 incorporated municipalities in Arizona, is governed by two core principles: protection of shared revenues and defense of local decision-making authority.

## LOCAL CONTROL

A core principle of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns – indeed, one of the very reasons for its existence – is that local decision-making authority must be protected and preserved. Decentralized government at the local level, closest to the governed, represents a conservative principle of American democracy recognizing that, when it comes to community governance, one size does not fit all.

The League calls upon the Legislature to respect the authority of cities and towns to govern their communities in the best interests of their residents. The League further seeks rejection of legislation that conflicts with charter provisions of Arizona's charter cities.

During the 51st Legislature, the League will endorse legislation that supports and sustains the principle of local control. For example, the League supports legislation that will return authority to municipalities to:

- Regulate the sale and use of consumer fireworks; and
- Determine the method, manner and timing of local elections.

## BUDGETARY RESOURCES, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

The League is also determined to safeguard the economic resources cities and towns require to ensure safety and to provide high-quality services and amenities for their residents. To that end, the League calls upon the Legislature to:

- Enact a budget that respects existing statutory formulas for the distribution of state-collected funds to local governments;
- Discontinue diversions of Highway User Revenue Fund monies to fund the operations of state agencies; and
- Modify legislation, enacted last year to facilitate the construction of public infrastructure associated with large manufacturing facilities, to remove its burden on state-shared revenues distributed to municipalities.

The League seeks to partner with the state in creating an environment that encourages greater economic development. Cities and towns are actively investigating new ways to promote business growth and seeking an expansion of tools and resources available to municipalities for this purpose. In line with these imperatives, the League supports legislation to:

- Authorize the formation of Revenue Allocation Districts;
- Improve Arizona's ports of entry with Mexico; and
- Support the long-term retention of Arizona's military installations.

Members of the League remain committed to the responsible management and protection of precious budgetary resources. In line with this principle, the League supports a modification to recently enacted pension reform law to require that the Alternative Contribution Rate paid by employers to the Arizona State Retirement System (ASRS) for employees who retire from an employer participating in ASRS and later return to work for an employer participating in ASRS to be applicable only to employees hired after July 1, 2011.

## NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENT

Cities and towns are committed to the preservation of Arizona's extraordinary natural resources and recognize that there are economic opportunities associated with environmental protection. The League urges the passage of legislation to:

- Fully fund state parks and to work with cities and towns on developing mechanisms for the operation of select parks by municipalities under long term leases;
- Improve forest health and reduce wildfire threats; and
- promote the economic engine of tourism.

## REGULATORY AND PROCESS REFORM

Municipalities strongly support local business and have undertaken initiatives to promote economic development and to create a favorable environment for the creation, growth and expansion of business opportunities. Cities and towns continue to seek ways to improve and streamline their regulatory, licensing and acquisition processes to promote cost effectiveness and efficient service delivery. The League will oppose any regulatory reform proposal that does not promote greater efficiency, effect significant cost savings or improve existing regulatory frameworks for the mutual benefit of stakeholders.

In order to improve municipal licensing and permitting processes, the League supports changes to regulatory reform legislation enacted in 2011. Also, the League supports legislation to authorize municipal use of Alternative Delivery Methods with respect to the award of construction contracts.

## COMMUNITY ENHANCEMENT

The League supports legislation to help cities enhance communities and improve the quality of life for their residents. The League endorses legislation to:

- Treat the crime of graffiti more seriously;
- Promote more flexibility in the annexation of county islands; and
- Relax state requirements for the extension of municipal assistance in the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of housing.