Michigan Township INSIGHTS

Aug. 14, 2026

Free MTA-member webinar reviews new sample data center zoning ordinance



The data center boom is creating a new planning challenge for townships across the state. *Where do data centers fit? What issues should townships consider? What should your zoning ordinance address?* Join MTA Legal Counsel Robert Thall from Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches, PC at noon on Aug. 26 for a **free *MTA Q&A* webinar, "Data Center Zoning Ordinance: The Next Step"** and learn practical insights into key considerations surrounding data center development. You don't want to miss this review of MTA's new sample data center zoning ordinance and what you need to know for your township. Registration is now open for this MTA-member township only event. The sample data center ordinance will be available shortly, and we will share with all member townships in advance of the webinar.

Free Treasury webinar explores 'Getting Grant Ready'

Register today for the state Department of Treasury's next Fiscally Ready Communities webinar, "Getting Grant Ready," on Aug. 20 at 10 a.m. The free two-hour session is designed to help appointed and elected officials align grant opportunities with community goals, assess capacity to manage grants, and develop initiative-taking policies and procedures. Participants will learn best practices for identifying, applying for and managing grants to strengthen fiscal sustainability and maximize funding impact. Questions can be submitted in advance to TreasLocalGov@michigan.gov, with the subject line "Fiscally Ready."



Municipal summit with the Cannabis Regulatory Agency





UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

Aug. 26:
FREE MTA Q&A Webinar Data Center Zoning Ordinance: The Next Step *(open to MTA-member townships only)*

Sept. 9: Emerging Issues in EMS Services workshop, Frankenmuth

Sept. 16: *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar Poll-Position: Practical Primer for Election Season

September & October
Regional Meetings & UP North Summit:
- **Sept. 22**, Bay City
- **Sept. 23**, Jackson
- **Sept. 29-30**, Harris
- **Oct. 7**, Thompsonville
- **Oct. 8**, Spring Lake
- **Oct. 13**, Gaylord

Township staff and officials can join the Michigan Cannabis Regulatory Agency's (CRA) next statewide municipal summit on Aug. 20 from 9-10:30 a.m. via Zoom. Staff from CRA's legal, licensing and enforcement divisions will host the event and answer questions from local municipal officials. Advanced registration is required; if you have participated in a previous CRA municipal summit, watch your email for a link the week of the event. For those who have not previously participated, RSVP by Aug. 17 to CRA-SocialEquity@michigan.gov with your township name, and the name, email address, title and phone number for all those planning to attend. Questions can also be submitted by 5 p.m. on Aug. 17 to the same email address. In addition to the summit, CRA has also created a Municipal Guide answering many commonly asked questions from municipal officials.

How local leaders can address PFAS

PFAS are called "forever chemicals" because they don't break down easily in the environment. They are found in many household and commercial products and can get into the environment from a variety of sources. At the next "Local Leaders" webinar on Sept. 17 at 10 a.m., the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy will cover how PFAS can impact communities, what residents can do to reduce their exposure, and how township leaders can raise awareness in their communities to the contaminants. Register online for the free event.

Launch of new UIA benefits system requires action prior to Nov. 9

The Michigan Unemployment Insurance Agency (UIA) is in the process of transitioning its legacy tax and benefits information system known as the Michigan Web Account System (MiWAM) to a new platform called MiUI. The tax functions of the new system came online earlier this year. The benefits system will go live on Monday, Nov. 9. **All employers** must initiate their MiUI account prior to Nov. 9 to maintain access to benefits functions like viewing claims or filing protests. The current MiWAM system will remain available until the MiUI benefits system goes live, after which all account information will be in the MiUI system and access to MiWAM will be discontinued. Additional information and support resources for the transition to the MiUI system are available via the UIA website.



Tree planting grant available for townships in DTE service area



ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS

ACRISURE
www.Acrisure.com/GreatLakes

MI Par Plan
MICHIGAN TOWNSHIP PARTCIPATING PLAN
www.theparplan.com/

MERS
Municipal Employees' Retirement System
www.mersofmich.com

* Adna Technologies

* Bauckham, Thall, Seeber Kaufman& Koches PC

* Consumers Energy

* Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC

* Foster Swift Collins & Smith, PC

* Hartleb Agency

* ITC Holdings Corp.

* Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, P.C.

* Mika Meyers, PLC

MTA QUICK LINKS

Answer Center
Training
Advocacy
Classifieds
Community Connection

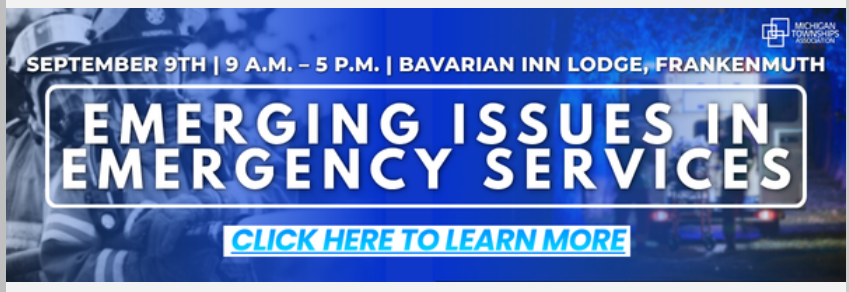
Townships can apply through Sept. 14 for grants of up to $4,000 for tree planting in their communities. The Michigan Department of Natural Resources is partnering with the DTE Foundation and ReLeaf Michigan to provide $95,000 for the tree planting grant program. Funds require a 1-to-1 match and communities must be served by DTE Energy's electric and natural gas services to be eligible.



Projects should plant trees away from utility lines along streets, in parks and near schools to help mitigate climate change, enhance local beauty and protect energy infrastructure. A grant handbook and application instructions are available on the program's website.

New Opioid Settlement Matching Initiative available for local governments

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) has launched a new Local Government Opioid Settlement Matching Initiative to partner with local governments and maximize the impact of state and local opioid settlement funds. Through the initiative, local governments that receive opioid settlement funds must commit their local funds to be eligible for state matching funds (matching ratios vary based numerous factors). Projects should address identified local or regional needs and align with Michigan's statewide substance use response framework. Funding may support planning, implementation, or both, with priority given to proposals that address gaps in local services or infrastructure, use data to inform investments, build sustainable local capacity, and demonstrate collaboration with encouragement for projects across jurisdictions. Beginning in August, MDHHS will accept letters of intent on a rolling basis, with submissions due by 11:59 p.m. on the 15th of each month. Selected proposals may move forward into a more detailed application process. Program information can be found here. Communities considering an application or interested in discussing potential projects are encouraged to contact kelly@micounties.org.



Free MIOSHA workplace violence prevention training

Township officials and staff can join a free virtual training opportunity that focuses on workplace violence prevention

Webcasts
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through behavioral threat assessment and management. Sponsored by the Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA), the session will be held via Zoom from 9 a.m. to noon on Aug. 25. Instructors will introduce participants to the U.S. Secret Service threat assessment model of “Identify, Assess and Manage,” designed to prevent the escalation of dangerous and violent situations. Among other components, the class will cover behavioral indicators of violence, OSHA violence prevention guidelines, risk assessment strategies, practical management of at-risk individuals and other critical workplace violence identification, and prevention techniques through real-world case examples. Space is limited and registration is required.

MDOT seeking public comment on long-range transportation plan

The public comment period is open for the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) draft state long-range transportation plan, known as Michigan Mobility 2050 (MM250). MM2050 incorporates the state’s rail and freight plans, active transportation plan, and the overall vision of Michigan’s transportation system to maintain a 20-year outlook. Review the draft plan and submit feedback on the MM2050 website by Sept. 18.

MTA seeks member review and input for 2027 legislative issues

MTA-member township officials can review and provide input on the MTA legislative policy platform. The legislative policy objectives—reviewed, updated and approved annually—guide the Association’s government relations efforts and reflect emerging issues and goals. MTA members are encouraged to review the current 2026-2027 Policy Platform and share any proposed additions and revisions by Monday, Nov. 23. Member-proposed policy changes will be reviewed by MTA policy committees and will be presented at the 2027 MTA Annual Meeting in conjunction with our 2027 Annual Educational Conference in April. Contact legislation@michigantownships.org with questions, comments or suggestions.

Federal grant opportunities

- **Low-income home repair:** The Housing Preservation Grant Program, administered by USDA Rural Development, is seeking applicants including local governments to support repair and rehabilitation programs for homes owned or occupied by low- and very-low-income residents. Grant funds can be used to support activities including installing handicap accessibility features, and repairing or replacing wiring, HVAC equipment, insulation, water systems and more. Applications are due by Sept. 8.
- **Wetland conservation:** The North American Wetlands Conservation Act grant program is accepting applications through Sept. 25 to fund public-private partnerships focusing on the protection, restoration and enhancement of wetlands and habitats of wetland

migratory birds. The maximum award amount is $3 million, and eligible projects must have a 1-to1 ratio of matching funds. Learn more about eligible projects and the application process on the grant webpage.

- **Native seed collection:** The federal Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Plant Conservation and Restoration Program is seeking partners, including local governments, to grow their supply chain for native plants to assist in fire recovery. Awards of up to $500,000 are available for projects that support native vegetation. Apply by Sept. 28 on grants.gov.
- **Water treatment innovation:** The Desalination and Water Purification Research Program is seeking to fund laboratory and pilot-scale projects testing new water treatment technology that lowers costs, energy requirements and other barriers associated with desalination and purification of water for safe use. Learn more about the program and apply online by Sept. 29.
- **Pedestrian safety:** Federal funding is available for local governments to complete bollard installation projects, which prevent pedestrian injuries and acts of terrorism in areas with high pedestrian traffic. Apply by Sept. 9 on grants.gov; there is no maximum or minimum award amount.
- **Wildlife resource management:** The BLM's Wildlife Resource Management Program is accepting applications for funding until Sept. 11 on grants.gov. Eligible projects include the protection, maintenance and development of wildlife habitats, reintroduction and propagation, field study programs, law enforcement, educational programs, mortality and toxicity investigations, monitoring and more. No match is required for the grants, which range from $10,000 to $2 million.
- **Endangered species:** The BLM is also looking to fund projects that support threatened and endangered species. Eligible projects should focus on conserving and recovering species and their habitats to help delist the species as endangered and threatened or support the bureau's goal of speeding up permitting by improving available information and data that can be used to support approval and authorizations. Apply online by Sept. 11 at grants.gov.

Reminders for Clerks

Early voting wage reimbursement. The Early Voting Wage Reimbursement application for August election early voting is available in the Bureau of Elections (BOE) Electronic Orders & Requests system until Sept. 30. Townships that conducted early voting without their county may submit requests directly to BOE with this application.

Video surveillance. The video surveillance requirement is in effect for all ballot drop boxes through the November election.

New staff. All new and temporary staff members require the submission of an account request in the BOE's eLearning Center and an accompanying approval. Clerks must report staff changes using the eLearning account request form.

Alternate addresses for AV ballots. Temporary addresses for absent voter (AV) ballots must be recorded in the Qualified Voter File as an ALTERNATE address. Failing to do so will trigger an update to the voter's driver record and a notification that the permanent address has changed.

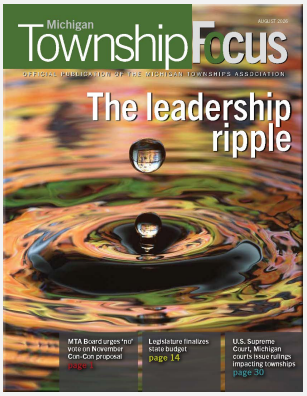
Election security workshop. A tabletop exercise for election officials and law enforcement will take place in Grand Rapids on Sept. 17. Participants will experience scenario-based response discussions designed to help election officials and law enforcement partners talk through their roles during an election security emergency. Registration is required and closes on Aug. 28.

Clerk operations. The BOE's Clerk Operations Curriculum, a resource for new and experienced clerks, includes training, instructions and reference materials to support key election operational activities. The curriculum brings together information about BOE systems and applications, election security, reimbursements, absent voter and state-funded drop boxes, postage programs, and support resources. The curriculum, along with frequently asked questions, are now available via eLearning.

September training opportunities. Several brief training opportunities have been scheduled. Interested election officials can sign up for the following September opportunities, each held at noon:

- Using the QVF/EPB Sandboxes: Sept. 1
- Election Inspectors: Sept. 3
- Absent Voter Process Part 1—Issuing AV Ballots: Sept. 8
- Military and Overseas Voters: Sept. 10
- EDARP Ballot Proofing Walkthrough: Sept. 15
- Logic and Accuracy Testing: Sept. 17
- Absent Voter Process Part 2—Receiving AV Ballots: Sept. 22
- Campaigners, Poll Watchers and Challengers: Sept. 24
- Early Voting Reminders for November: Sept. 29

Check out the August *Township Focus*



Your August issue of *Township Focus* is online and in mailboxes now! In this month's cover story, ***The leadership ripple: Small stones, big waves***, read how even the smallest acts of leadership can shape townships in ways far greater than their size. **"Legal Review"** details recent court rulings impacting Michigan's townships including rulings related to absent voter ballots, along with surplus funds from sales of foreclosed property and more. The **"Hello, MTA…?"** column dives into Election Day restrictions for polling places and **"Financial Forum"** discusses implementing capital improvement plans and township financial credibility.

Federal updates for week of July 27

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships Weekly Legislative Update for the latest on federal actions impacting townships.



MICHIGAN TOWNSHIPS ASSOCIATION

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