

# Michigan Township **INSIGHTS**

Feb. 2, 2024

## Assistance to Firefighters Grant application period now open

Townships can apply through March 8 for the [Assistance to Firefighters Grant](#) (AFG),

through the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which helps firefighters and other first responders obtain needed equipment, protective gear, emergency vehicles, training and other resources necessary for protecting the public and emergency personnel from fire and related hazards. Visit the [AFG webpage](#) to register for [remaining webinars](#) held next week to assist applicants, [application materials](#), [rules and tools](#), and more.



## Group begins petition efforts to eliminate all property taxes

As an update to what was shared last week in *Township Insights*, the [AxMITax petition](#) for a constitutional amendment to eliminate all property taxes was submitted this week to the state Bureau of Elections—allowing circulation of petitions without review by the State Board of Canvassers. However, by doing so, the group will not be protected from legal challenges that the language is fair and impartial. As proposed, the amendment would eliminate all real and personal property taxes, prohibit state or local alternatives, provide a portion of replacement revenue for local units of government, provide no revenue replacement for other entities that receive property tax funding, require a supermajority for any tax increase (both at the local and state legislative levels), and eliminate caps and limitations in the constitution.

Michigan Township  
Participating Plan

Spring 2024  
Risk Reduction  
Grant Cycle

**NOW OPEN**

Grant Applications  
Accepted Through  
March 15, 2024

[theparplan.com](http://theparplan.com)



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## Upcoming MTA Training & Events

Throughout February—  
[Board of Review Training](#)

Feb. 14 *Now You Know*  
lunchtime webinar: [Role  
of the FOIA Coordinator](#)

April 22-25: [Annual  
Educational Conference  
& Expo](#)

## ARPA obligation, reporting reminders

Townships have just 11 months—until the **end of 2024**—to obligate their allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. If your township has not already done so, begin planning now for how to put these funds to use in your community. ARPA funds do not have to be fully expended until the end of 2026. Townships are also reminded that all non-entitlement units of government (NEUs—all but eight of Michigan’s largest townships)—that accepted ARPA funds must complete their annual “Project and Expenditure Report” by the April 30 deadline. **Every NEU must complete the report**, even if your township has not obligated any funds or determined how you will put them to use. The reporting portal will open around April 1. Resources, including a [new reporting and portal overview webinar recording](#) from the U.S. Department of Treasury, are available on [MTA’s “Federal COVID Relief Funding” webpage](#).



## Share input on road funding, EGLE public outreach

Officials and residents can provide input to two state departments seeking comment from Michigan residents and others:

- **Road funding.** Officials and their residents 18 years and older can share their input until **March 1** on new ways to sustainably and fairly fund and maintain roads, bridges and other transportation infrastructure in a new [Road Usage Charges Survey](#) from the Michigan Department of Transportation. Qualifying survey participants may be invited to participate in a study pilot phase this fall and could be eligible for incentives.
- **Public participation.** Share input through **April 1** on how the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) can increase and enhance public participation. Draft updated [Public Participation Policy](#) and [Language Access Plan](#) are available for review, and listening sessions will be held **March 6**, from noon to 1:30 p.m., and **March 7** from 6 to 8 p.m. Email comments to [EGLE-Engage@michigan.gov](mailto:EGLE-Engage@michigan.gov).

## April 22 Pre-Conference sessions:

- \*\* Assessor's Renewal: March Madness
- \*\* Understanding Assessing Basics
- \*\* Defining Your Township's Land Use Future
- \*\* Show Me the Money
- \*\* Legal Institute for Township Attorneys

## MTA QUICK LINKS

[Answer Center](#)  
[Training](#)  
[Advocacy](#)  
[Classifieds](#)  
[Community Connection](#)  
[Webcasts](#)  
[Store](#)  
[Township Governance Academy](#)  
[Allied Service Providers](#)  
[NATaT](#)

## ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS



## Townships can request a free .gov domain

Townships can [now request](#) a .gov domain name for their website and email addresses—which offers enhanced security benefits for your township's digital presence—at the new [get.gov](#) website. Only U.S.-based government organizations are eligible to request a .gov domain. Requesters must be a government employee, or be working on behalf of a government organization, to request a .gov domain, and [must have a Login.gov account](#). The new get.gov also shares [more information and resources](#) about the benefits of a .gov domain, requirements, moving to a new .gov domain, and much more. [Register now](#) for an informational .gov town hall webinar, held at 1 p.m. on **Feb. 14**.

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## Is your township owed unclaimed property?

Yesterday, Feb. 1, was National Unclaimed Property Day. Michigan's Uniform Unclaimed Property Act requires holders of unclaimed property, including uncashed checks or forgotten bank accounts, to report and remit property belonging to owners who cannot be located or for whom there is no known address. Townships holding unclaimed property must provide the Michigan Department of Treasury with complete, accurate information on an annual unclaimed property report. Even townships may be owed unclaimed property! A search of the [Unclaimed Property online database](#) for "Twp" and "Township" shows more than 1,200 results of townships with unclaimed money waiting for them. Is your township one of them? Visit the [Unclaimed Property Division's Web page](#) to learn how to report or claim unclaimed property.

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## DNR update: Recreation grants workshop, wildlife habitat grant open

\* [Bauckham, Thall, Seeber Kaufman & Koches PC](#)

\* [Consumers Energy](#)

\* [Fahey Schultz Burzych Rhodes PLC](#)

\* [Foster, Swift, Collins & Smith, P.C.](#)

\* [Hartleb Agency](#)

\* [ITC Holdings Corp.](#)

\* [Rosati, Schultz, Joppich & Amtsbuechler, P.C.](#)

\* [Mika Meyers, PLC](#)



Township officials interested in seeking grants for outdoor recreation opportunities in their community can attend a virtual [workshop](#) sponsored by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on **Feb. 7**, from 1:30 to 3 p.m. The workshop will cover the process and requirements to apply for Natural Resources Trust Fund, Land and Water Conservation Fund and Recreation Passport grants, as well as eligible projects, application deadlines, minimum and maximum grant amounts, and other factors to ensure a complete application.

Applications are being accepted for the DNR's [Wildlife Habitat Grant](#), which aims to enhance and improve the quality and quantity of wildlife species habitat in support of the DNR's [Wildlife Division's strategic plan](#). Applications must be submitted through the [MiGrants system](#) by **March 18**, with successful applicants to be announced in early summer.

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## Take the Michigan Green Communities Challenge

All townships can take part in the [Michigan Green Communities](#) (MGC) Challenge, a free, annual sustainability benchmarking program, and submit their sustainability progress through **May 1**. MTA is an MGC partner. A new Platinum level certification has been added to the challenge this year to encourage communities to go even further in their sustainability journeys. Participating in the MGC Challenge gives local governments free technical assistance opportunities, free registration to the state's annual Michigan Sustainability Conference and MI Healthy Climate Conference, networking opportunities with other local governments, and more. MGC is hosting [office hours](#) from 11 a.m. to noon on **Feb. 15**, **March 21** and **April 18** to answer questions and assist communities in completing the MGC Challenge. Create an account today at [Michigan Green Communities](#).



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## Spring weight restrictions in effect

The Michigan Department of Transportation enacted its annual [spring weight restrictions](#) effective at 6 a.m. on Friday, **Feb. 2**. These restrictions are imposed and enforced on all state trunkline highways in the state. State routes typically carry M, I or US designations.

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## Reminders from BOE

**AV counting board changes.** Among recent changes made to absent voter (AV) counting boards are: sequestration is no longer required; and electronic devices can now be used if they are not disruptive (photography and video and audio recording are prohibited). The oath administered to inspectors, challengers and poll watchers has changed to include references to the photographing and recording procedures.

**Electronic poll books for early voting (EV).** Clerks coordinating an EV region can now configure early voting electronic poll book (EPB) devices in the Qualified Voter File (QVF). Instructions can be found in the "Early Voting EPB QVF Setup Guide" in the state Bureau of Election's (BOE) [eLearning Center](#). Before completing these steps, clerks and EV coordinators must establish EV regions and sites in the "Early Voting" module under "Elections" in QVF. Instructions can also be found in the eLearning Center under the "Early Voting Region QVF Setup Guide."

**Virtual training sessions.** The BOE is conducting virtual training for the early voting EPB **Feb. 6** through **Feb. 9**. Training is limited to election administrators serving as EV supervisors or those who expect to train election inspectors to use the early voting EPB. Virtual trainings on EV site procedures will be held **Feb. 12** and **Feb. 14**. This training is intended for clerks who have not yet been trained on EV procedures. Register in the [eLearning Center](#), where a recording of the virtual Train the Trainer session is also available.

**Election Day EPB practice.** BOE staff will be available **Feb. 13** and **Feb. 15** for Election Day EPB virtual practice sessions, which clerks can join at any point for guidance in preparing and using the Election Day EPB before, during and after Election Day. Sign up in the [eLearning Center](#).

**Signature cure notices.** Voters have until **4 p.m. on the fourth day before Election Day** to cure a signature deficiency on an AV ballot application and **5 p.m. on the third day after Election Day** to cure

a signature deficiency on an AV ballot return envelope. AV ballot application and return envelope signature cure notice templates are available in the [eLearning Center](#).

**New EV receipt acceptance testing.** As equipment for early voting is being delivered, Receipt Acceptance Testing is a county/jurisdiction responsibility and should be performed within 15 days of delivery. Some vendors may have an equipment checklist to help; however, the following procedures should be performed on **all newly received** equipment:

- Acceptance testing consists of accuracy tests and the standard test deck processes. While vendors can assist as needed, the actual testing must be completed by the county/jurisdiction.
- Receipt Acceptance Testing has two parts: a physical inspection to ensure that there is no damage and no missing parts, and the actual testing of equipment.

Questions on testing procedures? Contact (517) 335-3230 or [tarrantd2@michigan.gov](mailto:tarrantd2@michigan.gov). The Voting System Receipt/Acceptance Form (available in the [eLearning Center](#)) must be completed and signed by each jurisdiction receiving EV equipment indicating the equipment is in working condition and is performing as expected, and emailed to [BOEOperations@michigan.gov](mailto:BOEOperations@michigan.gov).

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## Applications accepted for April MAAO program

Applications are now being accepted by the State Tax Commission (STC) for the April 2024 Michigan Advanced Assessing Officer (MAAO) program. In-person classes and exams will be held in **Meridian Charter Township** (Ingham Co.). [Applications](#) must be received by the STC no later than **March 1**.

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## TGA Scholarship helps offset program costs

MTA's [Township Governance Academy](#) gives township board members, officials and personnel the knowledge and skills needed to make even more beneficial decisions and actions for their township. The Academy offers new ideas, shares "best practices" in township government and provides a hands-on approach to help you deal more effectively with everyday issues and opportunities in your community. Scholarships are available to assist you or your township with program costs associated with



this unique, valuable learning experience. [Applications](#) are due Friday, **March 1**.

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### **Federal update for week of Jan. 29**

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships [Weekly Legislative Update](#) for an update of federal actions impacting townships.