

Feb. 6, 2026

Bill sets deadline to replace certain candidates on ballot

Legislation was discussed this week in the House Election Integrity Committee that would establish a deadline for putting a replacement candidate on a ballot to fill certain candidate vacancies due to death, withdrawal or disqualification. Under [House Bill 5467](#), sponsored by Rep. Rachele Smit (R-Wayland Twp.), a candidate qualified to appear on the ballot could be replaced only if the vacancy occurs 55 or more days before the election. For a township office, the 55-day requirement under HB 5467 would apply if a candidate dies before a primary election, leaving their political party with no candidate or if a candidate dies, moves out of the township or becomes disqualified for any reason before a general election. The bill would also require that ballots with a replacement candidate's name be printed no later than 55 days before the election. The names of candidates who die, withdraw, or become disqualified 54 days or less before an election would stay on the ballot. The bill is expected to be considered at the next meeting of the committee.



Ban on foreign donations for election administration and ballot questions advances

Two bills limiting contributions from foreign nationals in elections passed the House this week. [House Bill 5198](#), sponsored by Rep. William Bruck (R-Erie Twp.), would require a person entering into an agreement to provide support for election administration to certify annually with the Secretary of State (SOS) whether they are knowingly a recipient of foreign donations. Local governments would be prohibited from entering into or continuing agreements with a person for election administration support if the person fails to provide SOS with the accurate certificate. [House Bill 5197](#), introduced by Rep. Rachele Smit (R-Wayland Twp.), would ban contributions from foreign nationals to support the qualification, passage or defeat of a ballot question. The bill prescribes civil fines for ballot question committees that do not return prohibited contributions within 30 days and foreign nationals who make contributions toward ballot questions directly or indirectly through a third party. The bills advance to the Senate for further consideration.

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UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

February [Board of Review Trainings](#): Basic, advanced, and online options are coming to a location (or laptop) near you!

Feb. 18: *Now You Know* Lunchtime Webinar [Cloud Control: Navigating Data Center Impacts](#) (For officials & staff from MTA-member townships & counties only)

March 17: [2026 MTA Capital Conference](#)

April 20-23: Registration is now open for [MTA's 2026 Annual Educational Conference & Expo](#) at the Grand Traverse Resort

ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS



Expiration of Property Tax Exemption Programs

The Commercial Rehabilitation Act and the Commercial Redevelopment Act, also known as the Commercial Facilities Exemption, expired on Dec. 31, 2025. New certificates cannot be issued; however, an exemption in effect on Dec. 31, 2025, shall continue until the expiration of the exemption certificate. For questions regarding these property tax exemption programs, contact pte@michigan.gov or visit the State's [property tax exemption website](#).

Up to \$30 Million in Funding Available with MI Neighborhood CDBG Program



The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSHDA) announced the availability of \$30 million in funding through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program for the creation of housing programs that benefit low- and moderate-income households. MSHDA's MI Neighborhood CDBG Program is looking to provide grants to non-entitlement units of local governments **not currently receiving a direct allocation of CDBG funds from HUD**. There are five activity types eligible for funding: homeowner rehabilitation, unoccupied rental rehabilitation, reconstruction, housing infrastructure and manufactured housing.

MSHDA is accepting Letters of Intent (LOI) from eligible units of local government seeking funding for proposals that align with the objectives of the CDBG Program. Awards may be made up to a maximum of \$1.5 million. To be considered for funding, please submit an [online LOI form](#), or print and mail a completed mail-in LOI form (via overnight mail only) to the attention of MSHDA NDD, 735 E. Michigan Ave, Lansing, Michigan 48912. Both versions of the form are available at michigan.gov/mshdacdbg. All submissions must be date stamped/submitted prior to 11:59 p.m. **March 4, 2026**. Forms and questions can be submitted to MSHDA-CDBG@michigan.gov.

* [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](#)

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Register for MTA's Capital Conference

Join us for [MTA's 2026 Capital Conference](#) on **March 17** in Lansing! This event puts you in the room with decisionmakers shaping Michigan's future—legislators, state departments and MTA policy experts. You'll walk away with the knowledge, clarity and tools you need to navigate the evolving policy landscape and better position your township. This year's event focuses on major legislative and policy issues at the forefront facing township government:

- Zoning proposals—from renewable energy facilities and data centers to housing
- Property tax reform and potential considerations
- State revenue forecast and impacts to the state budget
- New grant programs for your township
- Election changes affecting local governments and your term of office
- 2030 Census—making every resident count

Discover how you can [benefit from attending](#) and engage, advocate and influence the legislative issues impacting townships in 2026. **Learn more about [MTA's 2026 Capital Conference](#) in Lansing and register today!**

There's still time to sign up for MTA's Board of Review training!

Whether you're checking the box on the state's biennial training requirement or ready to level up your skills, MTA has you covered! Come sharpen your expertise, swap stories with peers and leave with practical handouts, helpful resources and insights from the experts—even seasoned board of review members will find value. Plus, lunch is included! [Download a signup form](#), learn more on [our website](#) or [register online now](#).

Environmental public notices in your community

The MiEnviro portal contains public notices, hearing documents and events about environmental activities in your community. A free [webinar](#) on Feb. 18 at 10 a.m. will help attendees understand how to navigate the portal, sign up for email



alerts about environmental permits and hearings in their area, and more.

Stream cleanup and monitoring grants

The Michigan Clean Water Corps is accepting funding proposals for two grant programs until March 6. Local units of government are eligible for up to \$5,000 in grant funding to support river, stream and creek cleanups through the [Volunteer Stream Cleanup Program](#). A separate [Stream Monitoring Program](#) has maximum award amounts between \$3,000 and \$20,000 depending on the progress of the project, which must involve volunteer benthic macroinvertebrate monitoring and habitat assessment in streams and rivers.

Transportation safety survey

The Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT) is collecting public input on transportation safety via a [survey](#) open through March 15. This survey is part of MDOT's initiative to update the Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) and Vulnerable Road User Safety Assessment (VRUSA) with guidelines that reduce traffic crashes and eliminate fatalities and serious injuries on Michigan roadways.

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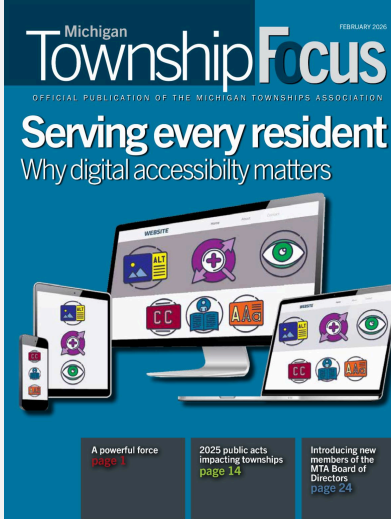
Recycling solutions coaching program

The [NextCycle Accelerator Program](#) is a six-month coaching and technical assistance program designed to advance projects that increase a community's capacity and public awareness of material recovery, composting and other activities that strengthen a circular economy. Local governments, intergovernmental initiatives and public-private partnerships are eligible to enter the program, which offers free individualized project and technical support to refine operational plans, analyze economic and environmental impacts, create marketing elements and identify funding pathways. A free informational [webinar](#) about the program is scheduled for Feb. 24 at noon. Applications for the program are due March 25.

Read the February issue of *Township Focus*—online now!

[Your February issue of *Township Focus*](#) will be in mailboxes soon, but you can read it here now! In this month's cover story, ***Serving every resident: Why digital accessibility matters***, we discuss making your website accessible to all residents and what will soon be required under federal law. Our feature story introduces new district directors recently

appointed to the MTA Board of Directors. This issue's "Hello, MTA...?" column explores handling township board resignations, while "Financial Forum" explains the new GASB statement on financial disclosure for subsequent events. You'll also find in this issue a list of 2025 public acts impacting townships, and details on a federal investment aimed at improving high-speed internet throughout Michigan.



Federal updates and special budget report for week of Feb. 2

Check out the National Association of Towns and Townships [Weekly Legislative Update](#) for the latest on federal actions impacting townships. The [Special Report](#) highlights provisions of the 11 enacted full-year FY 2026 spending bills that fund the federal government through Sept. 30, 2026, as well as the version of the FY 2026 Homeland Security spending bill ([H.R. 7147](#)) passed by the U.S. House in late January.



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