Michigan Township INSIGHTS

July 17, 2026

Member input sought for MTA's 2027 legislative issues



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.

Reminder: Asset Management Champions application deadline July 31

The Michigan Infrastructure Council is accepting applications for Cohort 10 of the Infrastructure Asset Management Champions Program until July 31. This state-sponsored, virtual training is free to participants and runs Aug. 11-Nov. 12, 2026. Participants— including local government leaders and employees, utilities, engineers, public works leaders and more—will learn how to assess their organization's asset management maturity using the Asset Management Readiness Scale and apply best practices that extend asset life, reduce costs and improve quality of life in their community.

Unemployment law changing

Bipartisan changes to unemployment insurance law go into effect in July. Beginning July 19, employers participating in Michigan's Work Share Program will be able to reduce employee hours by 10-60% (currently it is 15-45%), allowing employers to keep employees working reduced hours while they collect partial unemployment benefits that can help replace some of their lost income. Another change adds protections for survivors of domestic violence. Beginning July 17, people who leave their jobs due to domestic violence or for the safety of a member of their household may qualify for unemployment benefits. Visit the state's New Unemployment Law Changes webpage for additional information and FAQs on the July changes.



UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

Aug. 12: *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar Sticky Situations: Ethics in Everyday Decisions

Hot Topics in Planning & Zoning evening workshops:
- **Aug. 18** - Frankenmuth
- **Aug. 26** - Gaylord
- **Aug. 31** - Lawrence

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

Sept. & Oct. Regional Meetings & UP North Summit:
- **Sept. 22** - Bay City
- **Sept. 23** - Jackson
- **Sept. 29-30** (2-day U.P. summit) - Harris
- **Oct. 7** - Thompsonville
- **Oct 8** - Spring Lake
- **Oct 13** - Gaylord

ALLIED SERVICE PROVIDERS







Opioid settlement coordinating bill awaiting signature

Both chambers of the Legislature have passed legislation confirming the role of the state as the coordinator of opioid settlement funds for Michigan governments. Under Senate Bill 616, sponsored by Sen. Sylvia Santana (D-Detroit), political subdivisions could not seek additional civil action against opioid litigation defendants for actions addressed by a state settlement. Now awaiting a signature by the governor, the bill will continue the practice of the state receiving funds awarded in litigation with pharmaceutical companies and distributing them to eligible local governments.

Youth officially added to indigent defense standards

Indigent youth in the juvenile justice system will now qualify for indigent defense services under a bill pending review and signature by the governor. Senate Bill 81, sponsored by Sen. Sue Shink (D-Northfield Twp.), charges the Michigan Indigent Defense Commission with developing standards for indigent defense services that provide effective counsel for indigent youth. Indigent youth defense expenditures would be added to the calculation used to determine the local share of indigent defense costs.



Bills designed to protect elders from exploitation by appointed guardians sent to governor

Senate Bills 585 and 586, sponsored by Sens. Jeff Irwin (D-Ann Arbor) and Ruth Johnson (R-Goveland Twp.), were introduced to prevent guardians from exploiting their ward by selling the individual's property below market value for a quick profit. Under the bills, before the property of an individual who is subject to guardianship may be sold, there must be an appraisal to ensure the property is sold at fair market value. The court retains discretion to allow a guardian to forgo a new appraisal if other credible evidence of the property value can be provided. Additionally, the bills prevent a guardian from changing their ward's residence (e.g.,

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

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Classifieds
Community Connection
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Township Governance Academy
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moving from their home to a nursing facility) without finding from the court that the move is in the ward's best interest. SBs 585 and 586 are currently awaiting the governor's signature.

STC offers fall assessor trainings

The State Tax Commission (STC) is accepting applications for three assessor certification courses this fall:

- A Michigan Certified Assessing Technician (MCAT) program will be held on Sept. 24-25 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Troy, with the exam on Sept. 28 from 9 to 11 a.m. at the same location. Applications must be received (not postmarked) by the STC by Sept. 4.
- Enrollment for the September 2026 Michigan Certified Assessing Officer program is now open. The nine-month program covers 10 chapters with weekly virtual classroom sessions on either Monday or Tuesday evenings. Specific classroom dates will be provided after acceptance. Applications must be received by Aug. 14.
- Applications for the October 2026 Michigan Advanced Assessing Officer program must be received by Aug. 21.

Questions can be directed to GastW@michigan.gov.



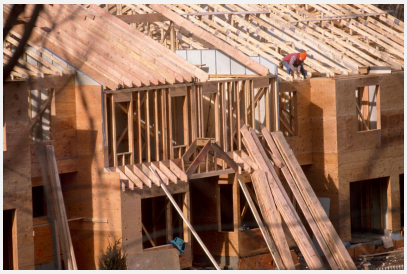
Two new federal grant opportunities for first responders

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services recently released two notices of funding opportunities available to local governments.

- First Responders: Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Support Services Act Grant provides funding to help first responders and community partners improve responses to substance use disorders, including opioid-related emergencies. The program supports training, coordination and resources for delivering and administering opioid overdose reversal medications.
- Mental Health Awareness Training Grants provide funding to train individuals and organizations to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health challenges and substance use disorders and respond appropriately. The program supports evidence-based training that promotes safe de-escalation of crisis situations.

Responses for each are due no later than July 27.

Participate in MSHDA's housing survey to shape next Statewide Housing Plan



The Michigan State Housing Development Authority (MSDHA) is seeking input to help shape the future of housing in Michigan by participating in a new public survey. The survey marks the first statewide public engagement effort in the development of Michigan's next housing plan and seeks to build on the state's first housing plan released in 2022. Township officials and staff are encouraged to participate in the survey, as the input will play a role in developing the new plan and help form goals and strategies for the years ahead.

Food waste reduction grant opportunities and webinar

Whether your township has a food waste reduction program looking for more resources or your team is looking for somewhere to start, local government leaders interested in reducing food waste are invited to a Catalyst Communities webinar on July 30 at 2 p.m. The webinar, hosted by the state Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy, will cover successful initiatives from across the state and two open requests for proposals accepting applications through Aug. 14. The Food Rescue Grant funds infrastructure, vehicles, technology and training for food rescue and surplus food donation operations. The Organics Infrastructure Grant can be used for curbside or public drop off food waste collections, collection vehicles and processing facilities.

Election reminders from the BOE

In preparation for the 2026 elections, the state Bureau of Elections (BOE) reminds clerks that polling locations must ensure Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, noting that entry doors must have a minimum clear width of 32 inches when opened 90 degrees with handles and pulls that can be operated with one hand and minimal force.

Clerks should ensure as soon as possible that the Qualified Voter File (QVF) is updated with days and operating hours for early voting sites. Any ballots returned by the post office should be rejected as "undeliverable" in the QVF.

Upcoming deadlines for the August and November elections include:

- **July 20**: Public logic and accuracy testing of early voting equipment for the August election must be completed.
- **July 24**:
  - August write-in candidates must file Declaration of Intent forms by 4 p.m.
  - Deadline for clerks processing and tabulating absent voter (AV) ballots ahead of Election Day to post revised notice of location, dates, hours or number of election inspectors

- **July 27**: Townships with a population of at least 5,000 with an established AV counting board may begin tabulating AV ballots if they have provided timely notice of preprocessing.
- **July 28**: Last day for petitions to place a local ballot question on the November ballot can be filed with the applicable clerk.
- **Aug. 3**: Any township with an established AV counting board may begin tabulating AV ballots if they have provided timely notice of preprocessing.

MTA's September event examines *Emerging Issues in Emergency Services*



MTA's annual full-day *Emerging Issues in Emergency Services* workshop—coming to the Bavarian Inn Lodge in Frankenmuth on Sept. 9—can help you get a handle on the hot issues shaping today's township fire departments. Learn the latest from the state Bureaus of Fire Services and Emergency Preparedness, EMS and Systems of Care, get practical guidance on risk management in operations, insights in peer support, paid-on-call employment law and more. Register now or download all the details here.

Federal updates for week of July 14

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

