

March 27, 2026

## Bill to allow contract of election duties in absence of township clerk

Legislation was recently introduced and scheduled before a House committee to allow a township to contract for election duties if the township clerk and deputy clerk are not available to perform the election duties. Currently, if a township clerk and the deputy clerk are unavailable to perform necessary election functions related to an election, the township board must appoint a qualified person who is a registered elector of the township to perform those functions until the clerk or a deputy resumes their duties. [House Bill 5717](#), sponsored by Rep. Jennifer Wortz (R-Quincy Twp.), would permit the township board to contract with an individual who is accredited to conduct elections under the act if they live in a reasonable proximity to the township to perform election functions until the township clerk or a deputy resumes those duties or a new township clerk is appointed or elected. MTA is working with the sponsor on changes to clarify the process. The bill could be considered when the House returns from their spring recess in mid-April.



## Expanded DDAs for islands now law

Townships that have two distinct geographic areas separated by a body of water now have statutory clarification to include an island's downtown in their downtown development authority (DDA). [Public Act 5 of 2026](#), sponsored by Sen. Kevin Hertel (D-St. Clair Shores), allows a municipality's designated downtown district to include two areas separated by a body of water if the municipality is located on the mainland and one or more islands. This enables municipalities to expand the coverage of their DDAs, which use tax increment financing to fund improvements to buildings or infrastructure within downtown districts. The bill's expansion is intended to attract businesses to the additional districts, finance desired projects and enable the community to access grants previously unavailable to them. The legislation was signed by the governor on March 25 and became effective on March 26.

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## UPCOMING MTA TRAINING

**April 8:** *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar [What Your Township Needs to Know About Franchises](#)

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

**This May:** [Planning & Zoning Primer](#) in three locations, 4-8 p.m.

**May 13:** *Now You Know* lunchtime webinar [Dig up Your Township's Cemetery Ordinance](#)

**Coming in June:** [Election Ready](#) afternoon workshops, in-person or online.

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**AFFORDABLE AND RESPONSIVE  
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An MTA-supported bill expanding the tax increment financing program for inland lakes was approved by the Senate Local Government Committee this week. [Senate Bill 553](#), introduced by Sen. Sam Singh (D-East Lansing), would expand the types of waterways eligible for a water improvement district to include inland rivers. Municipalities would have to approve the district and water resource improvement authority by resolution. The infusion of funds could be used to promote public access to the inland river system, improve water quality, service stormwater and wastewater infrastructure, protect wildlife and shorelines, and other activities in the best interests of the public. The bill advances to the Senate floor for a vote by the full chamber.

**Immigration enforcement by local law enforcement changes approved by committee**

Two bills involving immigration enforcement and conduct by local law enforcement were approved by the Senate Committee on Civil Rights, Judiciary, and Public Safety this week. [Senate Bill 508](#), sponsored by Sen. Mary Cavanagh (D-Redford Chtr. Twp.), would establish a list of “protected areas” where law enforcement could not perform immigration operations without a court order or unless action was needed to prevent immediate danger to the public. The protected areas would include educational institutions, houses of worship, hospitals, courthouses, religious ceremonies like funerals or weddings, and certain shelters and organizations assisting children, pregnant women, crime and abuse victims, and individuals with significant disabilities. [SB 510](#), sponsored by Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield), would require federal immigration officers to wear an appropriate uniform and an activated body camera, while prohibiting the use of a mask or personal disguise. A previous version of the bill applied to all law enforcement, but the scope narrowed the requirements to federal immigration officers. The bill includes exceptions for undercover officers and allows masks for protection against harmful environmental conditions, such as gas or toxins, or inclement weather. Both bills await a vote by the full Senate.

[www.Acrisure.com/GreatLakes](http://www.Acrisure.com/GreatLakes)[www.mersofmich.com](http://www.mersofmich.com)[\\* 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](#)**Michigan Township Participating Plan**Safeguarding Michigan Public Entities Since 1985  
[theparplan.com](http://theparplan.com)**MTA QUICK LINKS**

- [Answer Center](#)
- [Training](#)
- [Advocacy](#)
- [Classifieds](#)
- [Community Connection](#)
- [Webcasts](#)
- [Store](#)
- [Township Governance Academy](#)
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THREE LOCATIONS IN MAY | 5 - 8 P.M.

**Planning & Zoning Primer****May 6 | Lawrence, Van Buren ISD****May 13 | Frankenmuth, Bavarian Inn Lodge****May 18 | Harbor Springs, The Highlands****CLICK FOR MORE INFO!**

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## Take the Michigan Green Communities Challenge!

The [Michigan Green Communities \(MGC\) Challenge](#) reporting period is open through May 1 for local governments to share their sustainability efforts taken in 2025. The MGC Challenge is an annual sustainability recognition program that acts as a guide to help communities embed sustainability into their operations, policies and programs. Participating communities can earn certification and gain access to resources, including a network of local leaders and environmental experts, by completing the free challenge. It also includes access to up to two registrations for the MI Healthy Climate Conference and Michigan Sustainability Conference. Learn more on the [Michigan Green Communities website](#). MTA is a Michigan Green Communities partner.

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## Justice Assistance Grant Program applications accepted

Local governments can apply for the [2025 Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant \(JAG\) Program](#) to support hiring personnel, purchasing equipment, supplies, training, technical assistance and information systems across 11 criminal justice program areas, including law enforcement, prosecution, prevention, corrections, drug treatment, mental health and more. Eligible applicants are units of local government, including townships, cities and counties, that perform law enforcement functions and are listed on the [JAG Allocations webpage](#). The total funding amount available is \$96,384,585 and applications are due April 21 ([Grants.gov](#)) and April 28 ([JustGrants](#)).

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## Get MTA on-demand training for half-off through March 31!

MTA's [Online Learning Center](#)

is home to a wide variety of webinars all designed with township officials in mind.

From assessing to zoning, you're sure to find something for everyone on your township team. Get even more value this month with our *Spring into Learning* sale, offering 50% off nearly all on-demand classes. Too busy to watch right now? Buy now and watch later, up to a year from purchase. Visit [learn.michigantownships.org](https://learn.michigantownships.org) to get started; apply discount code **March2026** when you check out to get the deal.



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## Upcoming EGLE webinars cover recycling, pollution cleanup grants, contamination, climate action

The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) is hosting four upcoming webinars for local leaders:

- Effective recycling programs often involve collaboration across jurisdictions. A [webinar](#) on April 7 at 10:30 a.m. will explore how recycling authorities and interlocal agreements can help communities pool resources, streamline operations and achieve shared sustainability goals.
- Local units of government are eligible for grant funding to address nonpoint source pollution from the approaching FY26 [Nonpoint Source Watershed Implementation](#) program. On April 8 at 10 a.m., program staff will present the upcoming application process and timeline, eligible projects, tips for successful applications and more in a [free webinar](#).
- New rapid test results for beach water quality, surface water contamination and diseases in wastewater are available to the public through [Michigan Network for Environmental Health & Technology](#). Register now for a April 16 [webinar](#) for local leaders about how to use the network to protect public health in their communities.
- The next Catalyst Communities webinar will cover steps communities can take to advance climate action. [Register online](#) for this free two-hour virtual gathering scheduled for April 21 at 1 p.m.

## Modernizing Michigan

Our Government Banking forum featuring:  
**Payments, Fraud Protection and Infrastructure Financing**  
 March 26, 10am – 3pm, Troy, Michigan



To RSVP, scan the QR code to email  
[GovernmentBanking@flagstar.com](mailto:GovernmentBanking@flagstar.com)



## Free MIOSHA situational awareness training

Situational awareness can be lifesaving when employees face threats and aggressive encounters during their work. The Michigan Occupational Safety and Health Administration (MIOSHA) is hosting a virtual training course from 9 a.m. to noon on March 31 to help employees strengthen their situational awareness skills and responses to aggressive behavior to protect themselves while out in the community. [Registration](#) is required for this free webinar.

## Spring weight restrictions change effective March 30

Effective 6 a.m. on March 30, [weight restrictions](#) will be lifted on all state trunkline highways from the southern state line north to and including US-10 in Ludington at the M-116 intersection, then east to US-127 in Clare County, south to US-10 in Clare County, east on US-10 to M-25 in Bay City, and including the entire thumb area. [Frost restrictions](#) are still in effect for the remainder of the state, and will be imposed and enforced on all state trunkline highways north of the US-10/M-25 line.



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 MICHIGAN'S EXPERTS IN WEB DEVELOPMENT

### Reminders for clerks

**Virtual training:** Ahead of the May election, the state Bureau of Elections (BOE) is providing virtual training sessions to ensure election staff are updated on key administrative tasks and election procedures:

- [QVF Reports for Election Prep](#), April 14 at noon
- [0-14 Day Voter Registration](#), April 16 at noon
- [Early Voting Electronic Pollbook \(EV EPB\)](#), March 31 and April 9 at 11 a.m., and April 2 and 7 at 2 p.m.
- [Early Voting Procedure](#), March 31 and April 9 at 2 p.m., and April 2 and 7 at 11 a.m.)

*Note:* BOE will repeat the EV EPB and Early Voting Procedure courses ahead of the August and November elections.

**Test your voting equipment:** Clerks should initiate preliminary equipment testing soon after receiving ballots. Accuracy tests are the responsibility of local election commissions in accordance procedures established by the secretary of state.

### Additional May 5 election deadlines:

- **Notice of registration** must be posted in a newspaper of general circulation no later than April 6.
- At least eight **weekend hours** for absentee voting must be available the Saturday and Sunday ahead of the election. Clerks must post the weekend hours, which can be split across the weekend or held on a single day, and update applicable hours in the Qualified Voter File no later than April 6.
- **Election inspectors** must be appointed by April 14, via formal action by your election commission, which is subject to the Open Meetings Act.

### Federal updates for week of March 23

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



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