



Keeping Power in the Hands of the People

Local governments allow people to live and work in **unique communities** that best match their **values and preferences** for taxation, government service levels and regulatory climate.

Local governments prevent other layers of government from overreaching into people's **liberty** and **freedom**.

The independence and authority of townships attracts people to **actively participate** in civic affairs.

Townships offer employers **lower property tax rates**, expeditious regulatory review and action, and large land tracts.

In the U.S., Michigan ranks 28th in the number of local governments per capita.

Nearly half of the local governments in the U.S. have 1,000 or fewer residents. These smaller governments are well-positioned to respond efficiently to present public budget challenges.

Township officials cooperate with neighboring entities in the efficient delivery of services, infrastructure expansion, and appropriate economic development site selection.



Townships: Serving Michigan's Communities



The Michigan Townships Association advances local democracy by fostering township leadership and public policy essential for a strong and vibrant Michigan.

Learn more at www.michigantownships.org.





MTA Legislative Priorities on Behalf of Townships

Delivering the Best Value for Local Services

Compared to Michigan's cities and villages, TOWNSHIPS:

- Serve nearly 52% of the state's population
- Govern more than 96% of the state's land area
- Protect 60% of the state's total property valuation
- Spend 79% less for operations, debt and capital outlays
- Spend 78% less for salaries and wages
- Spend 80% less for law enforcement
- Spend 53% less for fire protection
- Spend 40% less for tax collections and accounting
- Spend 35% less for other administration, including elections
- Receive 77% less total revenue
- Receive 64% less property tax revenue

TOWNSHIPS provide essential local government services to residents, including:

- Fire, police and EMS
- Planning and zoning
- Tax collection
- Elections
- Property assessing
- Public water and sewers
- Library services
- Parks and recreation
- Senior programs
- Waste hauling and recycling
- Cemeteries
- Road funding

ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION

MTA supports taxation policies that are fair, equitable and efficiently administered. To ensure accountability and local accessibility, property assessment and taxation must be kept at the local level, but without additional revenue impacts and administrative burdens. Legislation should ensure that local units receive the financial resources from taxes they need to perform functions and provide necessary services. MTA also supports changes that streamline the tax-collecting process and eliminate redundancies.

ELECTIONS

MTA believes elections are best handled by township clerks and supports protecting local control of election administration. We support policies that increase voter registration and participation, both through technology as well as changes to absentee ballots. MTA also supports eliminating or increasing term limits.

ENVIRONMENT AND LAND USE

MTA advocates for environmental laws and practices that help townships to efficiently and effectively protect the public health, safety and general welfare. We support more local control in areas such as oil and gas regulation, land use planning, zoning decisions, and invasive species prevention. Federal and state laws and regulations should complement township growth and development rather than hinder it.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

MTA believes townships should be treated fairly by the state, with an equitable

distribution of statutory revenue sharing, full compensation for state-owned land and equal application of state laws. Townships should have the flexibility to participate in regional initiatives and collaborate with other local units. While MTA supports a standard local government consolidation process, we believe this decision should be that of the local unit, and boundaries should be protected for townships that provide all essential services.

TOWNSHIP OPERATIONS

State and federal governments should give Michigan townships broad discretion and autonomy to govern the delivery of non-statutory programs and services protecting the public health, safety and general welfare. MTA supports the ability to recoup the cost of services such as public safety and providing public information. However, we oppose the imposition of unfunded mandates.

TRANSPORTATION

In response to inadequate state funding for roads, townships contribute over \$186 million per year for road maintenance and construction, despite no statutory responsibility to fund roads. Given the level of local money that townships voluntarily contribute to the Michigan transportation system, township officials support increased funding for Michigan's transportation system, allowing townships a stronger role in decisions affecting its transportation costs and priorities, and instituting efficiencies to stretch scarce transportation funding.

Urban TOWNSHIPS provide **quality services** while limited by law to half the maximum property rate authorized to cities. They have been virtually eliminated from statutory revenue sharing.

Services are often delivered in small TOWNSHIPS by part-time **officials** and **employees** receiving very nominal salaries and often no benefits.