



500 SW 7th Street,  
Suite 101  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Phone (515) 244-7282  
[LegislativeStaff@iowaleague.org](mailto:LegislativeStaff@iowaleague.org)  
[www.iowaleague.org](http://www.iowaleague.org)

Please utilize this document as a conversation or relationship starter with your state elected officials and build a dialogue to improve laws that pertain to cities. And remember, the best time to get to know your legislator is not when you need to ask for a favor.

## NEW LAWS OF INTEREST TO CITIES 2025 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The 2025 legislative session adjourned sine die on May 15, concluding the first session of the 91st General Assembly. As expected in a non-election year, the pace of legislative activity was consistent and robust, with lawmakers submitting new ideas for consideration and advancing policy priorities that have gained momentum over recent sessions.

The dominant themes of 2025 emphasized the balance between state-level uniformity and local government flexibility, particularly in areas such as zoning, public safety, and economic development. Several laws establish clear statewide parameters limiting cities' ability to enact ordinances that go beyond state or federal requirements, specifically concerning contractor regulations, accessory dwelling units, and diversity, equity, and inclusion program offices. At the same time, cities gained a few new tools to support volunteer emergency responders and to manage public safety resources more effectively.

Significant reforms to economic development incentives reflect a focus on streamlining tax credits and aligning them with state priorities for growth and sustainability. The session also included important updates on public pension contributions and expanded protections for public safety employees.

The session's only vetoes related to eminent domain and CO<sub>2</sub> pipeline authority, and medical psilocybin use—areas largely outside direct city control but still relevant to ongoing policy discussions at the local level.

As always, the League has summarized the key laws that may affect your community in this publication. We encourage city officials to review the summaries, track implementation timelines, and contact League staff with questions or concerns regarding a specific community.

---

### Table of Contents

Reader's Guide to New Laws Summaries .....	2
Legislation Passed In 2025 .....	3
City Administration .....	3
City Financing .....	4
Establishment of Statewide Regulations .....	5
Public Safety & Pensions .....	7
Miscellaneous .....	8

## Reader's Guide to New Laws Summaries

This Special Report outlines legislation passed during the 2025 legislative session that affects cities and is categorized in subject areas for easier reading. The sample entry below explains what type of information this report contains.

*Note: The report is intended as a reference guide to new laws that may interest your community. This report should not act as a substitute for the actual final enrolled legislation, nor should it substitute for advice from an attorney.*

### Reminder:

The text of each bill is accessible from the General Assembly's website: [www.legis.iowa.gov](http://www.legis.iowa.gov)

Indicates the bill number and the League's title for the bill. HF means the bill originated in the House and SF means the bill originated in the Senate.

The digest provides information on the entire bill or a portion of the legislation that impacts cities. Note that a "Section" reference here refers to sections of the enrolled bill.

### HF 123 | Bill Name

This is where a description of the bill would be, along with an explanation of how it impacts city governments.

*Amends Section 12A.3 | Effective February 10, 2025*

Indicates the Section or Chapter in the *Code of Iowa* that has been amended.

Indicates the effective date.

## Legislation Passed In 2025

### City Administration

#### **SF 588 | Public Notice Timeframe Alignment (League Proactive Legislation)**

Aligns public notice timing publication requirements for local government public hearings to a single standardized timeframe of 4-20 days, regardless of the hearing's topic.

*Amends Sections 24.2A, 28E.17, 103A.12, 404.2, 414.4, Chapter 368, 372.4, and Chapter 384 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

#### **HF 706 | Open Records Requirements for Governmental Bodies**

Requires a newly elected or appointed public official of a governmental body to complete a course of training regarding the responsibilities and requirements of open records laws for government officials. This training must take place within 90 days of the official either taking their oath of office or assuming the responsibilities of the office. The Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB), or another entity providing the training, is required to provide a certificate of course completion, and the governmental body must maintain and make these certificates of completion available for the public. The law increases civil penalties for violation of open records laws to \$500-\$2,500 for accidental violations and \$5,000-\$12,000 for knowing violations. Additionally, a member of a governmental body can be removed from office if they have engaged in prior violations for which damages were assessed.

*Amends Sections 21.6, 22.7, 23.6, 23.10, and creates Section 21.12 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

#### **HF 928 | Election Recount and Contest Procedures**

Clarifies procedures regarding when the county board of supervisors meets to canvass the vote in a local election, when a recount can be requested, and what parameters for the differences between votes must exist for a recount to be taken up. Additionally, the law indicates that the state commissioner of elections is responsible for directing any statewide, general assembly, or federal office recount procedures, and provides rules for the procedures that the state commissioner, candidates, political parties, and court systems must follow for a recount.

*Amends Sections 43.49, 43.56, 46.24, and Chapter 50 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

#### **HF 954 | Election Conduct Procedures**

Establishes specific dates for city special elections following standard city elections and clarifies that a federal candidate convicted of a felony is not barred from campaigning for federal office in Iowa. The law requires the state commissioner of elections to issue a separate affidavit of candidacy for federal candidates and mandates county election commissioners to notify the state commissioner if their office undergoes any physical or cybersecurity assessments by state, federal, or other entities. It also updates voter registration storage requirements and retention periods and prohibits ranked-choice voting.

*Amends Sections 9E.6 and 39.2 through 49.93 | Effective Date July 1, 2025 & January 1, 2026*

#### **HF 645 | Immunity for Racing Facilities from Nuisance Actions**

Prohibits surrounding property owners from bringing a nuisance action against a racetrack or racing facility if the track or facility predates the building or purchasing of the surrounding property.

*Amends Section 657.13 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

**HF 652 | Additional Powers Granted to City Zoning Boards of Adjustment**

Gives city (and county) boards of adjustment additional authority to consider appeals for variances in cases where strict enforcement of zoning rules creates practical difficulties for the property owner. Prior to this legislation, boards could only grant variances under a very strict standard called “unnecessary hardship.” HF652 creates a more flexible standard for certain types of variances, called dimensional variances. These include things like setbacks, lot size, height, signage, and parking. Under the new law, dimensional variances can be granted if a strict application of the zoning rules creates practical difficulties for the landowner, the problem is unique to the property and not self-created, and the variance won’t significantly change the character of the neighborhood. The original strict standard for use variances (e.g., allowing a commercial use in a residential zone) still applies.

*Amends Sections 335.15 and 414.12 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

---

**City Financing**


---

**HF 844 | Financial Institutions Public Funds Deposit Eligibility**

Eliminates the requirement that public funds only be deposited into financial institutions that demonstrate a commitment to serving local communities, as determined by the state treasurer.

*Amends Section 524.223 and repeals Section 12C.6A | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

**SF 574 | Reduced Retention Fees for Public Improvement Contracts**

Reduces the maximum retention fee cities can withhold from contractors and subcontractors on public improvement projects from 5% to 3%. Retained funds continue to be reserved for payment of claims related to materials and labor performed on the projects.

*Amends Section 573.12 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

**SF 619 | Natural Hazard Mitigation and Disaster Recovery**

Establishes and updates key programs and regulations related to natural hazard mitigation and disaster recovery. The law creates the Natural Hazard Mitigation Financing Program to provide loans for projects like flood control infrastructure, zoning changes, and building code enforcement, with administration by the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (HSEMD) and the Iowa Finance Authority (IFA). It modifies the Disaster Recovery Housing Assistance Program, requiring clearer eligibility criteria, funding limits for administrative costs, and annual legislative reporting by IFA. The law expands regulations on insurance benefit assignments to residential contractors and establishes licensing and disciplinary rules for adjusters, appraisers, and umpires. Additionally, it clarifies that disaster housing grants are tax-exempt until 2028, and allows the Governor or Department of Management to use up to 10% of the Iowa Economic Emergency Fund for disaster-related activities. Finally, it allocates \$2 million to the Nuisance Property Remediation Assistance Fund to support communities in addressing nuisance properties.

*Creates Sections 16.230 through 16.233; amends Sections 16.57B and 16.57D; 422.7; 507B.4 and 515.137A; 522B.5A and Chapter 522C; 507B.2 and 522B.5A and Chapter 522F; 8.55; and makes appropriations | Effective Date(s): July 1, 2025 (Except Divisions 3 and 8, which are effective as of April 22, 2025)*

**SF 657 | IEDA Tax Incentive Reform**

Overhauls Iowa's economic development tax incentive programs, impacting collaboration between the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) and local governments. The law implements a \$170 million cap on key tax credits, establishes the Business Incentives for Growth (BIG) Program allowing property tax exemptions only for eligible businesses, and repeals the High Quality Jobs Program while honoring existing agreements. The legislation clarifies eligibility rules for Renewable Chemical Production tax credits, creates the Iowa Film Production Incentive Program, and eliminates several tax credit programs, including Employer Child Care and Assistive Device credits. The law also reduces Endow Iowa tax credits, introduces new credits for research and development and sustainable aviation fuel production, and authorizes the recovery of credits from non-compliant businesses. Additional provisions allow adjustments to financial assistance amid business closures, align IEDA's rules with natural disaster legislation, and update various tax and incentive programs with effective dates varying by division.

*Amends or repeals multiple Sections in Chapters 15, 15E, 422, and 452A | Effective Dates Vary by Division*

**HF 975 | IEDA Reform and Funding Adjustments**

Reforms multiple programs and funding mechanisms under the Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA). The law updates the committee that reviews applications for the Strategic Infrastructure Program, modifies the awarding process for Brownfield and Grayfield tax credits, and revises the Community Attraction and Tourism Program. It also changes the Historic Preservation tax credit registration requirements, eliminates the Title Guaranty Board, and reassigns responsibilities related to arts, culture, and cultural and entertainment district promotion within IEDA.

*Amends various Sections in Chapters 15, 15F, 404A, and 16 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

---

## **Establishment of Statewide Regulations**

---

**SF 592 | Required Allowance of ADUs**

Requires cities to allow at least one accessory dwelling unit (ADU) on the same lot as a single-family home if it meets state building code (Iowa Code Chapter 103A) and does not exceed 1,000 square feet or 50% of the main dwelling's size. ADU permits must be approved without a hearing and on the same timeline as single-family homes; if denied, the city must issue a written explanation and outline a path to approval. Cities may not impose additional restrictions on ADUs beyond what applies to single-family residences, except where limited by a historic building code, deed restriction, or the rules of a co-op, HOA, or condo association. Manufactured and mobile homes may be converted into ADUs if placed on a permanent foundation. Any local regulation inconsistent with the new law is void, though cities may adopt more permissive ADU policies if desired. Local zoning ordinances and accessory structure rules should be reviewed for compliance.

*Amends Section 364.3 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

**SF 303 | Prohibition of City Bans on Fireworks on Specific Dates**

Prohibits cities from banning the use of consumer fireworks on July 3, 4, and December 31, except as allowed under the time-of-day restrictions set in Iowa Code Section 727.2(4). Specifically, cities must allow fireworks to be used or exploded on July 3rd between 9 a.m. and 10 p.m., on July 4 between 9 a.m. and 11 p.m., and on December 31 between 9 a.m. and 12:30 a.m. on January 1. Cities that currently have broader bans on fireworks usage must update their local ordinances.

*Amends Section 364.2 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

**HF 856 | Prohibition of City Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Offices or Officers**

Prohibits cities from using public funds to establish or support DEI offices or officers, whether by employment or contract. The law defines DEI broadly to include efforts or policies that promote preferential treatment, benefits, or messaging based on race, color, ethnicity, or gender, including concepts such as unconscious bias, systemic oppression, allyship, and social justice. A DEI “office” is any department focused on DEI-related work, and a DEI “officer” is any employee or contractor whose duties are related to such activities. The law provides exemptions for legal compliance offices, recruitment offices, licensed health professionals, teaching and research, and DEI efforts required by federal contracts. Proclamations or human rights commissions that do not establish a dedicated DEI office or officer may still be permissible, but cities should consult their attorneys. The law also creates enforcement mechanisms: the Attorney General may bring a writ of mandamus, and public employees may seek an injunction through the courts.

*Creates Sections 19.1 through 19.3 | Effective Date: May 27, 2025*

**SF 311 | Civil Service Reform**

Prohibits cities with a civil service commission from creating a separate citizen review board or similar entity to oversee law enforcement officers, firefighters, or EMS providers. The bill also lowers the population threshold for certain civil service commission requirements. Previously, only cities with populations over 70,000 had to appoint at least five commissioners; SF 311 reduces this threshold to 50,000, now requiring cities with populations over 50,000 to establish a commission with no fewer than five and no more than seven members by ordinance. The bill further clarifies that the city carries the burden of proof when seeking to remove someone from their civil service position and establishes specific procedural and timing requirements for scheduling and conducting appeal hearings.

*Amends Section 364.3 and Chapter 400 | Effective Date: August 16, 2025*

**SF 603 | Prohibition of Additional Contractor or Developer Compensation or Training Requirements**

Prohibits cities from requiring or incentivizing developers, contractors, or subcontractors to participate in apprenticeship or training programs beyond what state law mandates, affirming that such programs are voluntary unless otherwise required by state law. This legislation was amended by SF262 to clarify that local governments can still impose training requirements if they are necessary to comply with federal laws or regulations.

*Amends Sections 84D.8 and 364.3 | Effective Date: March 28, 2025*

**HF 860 | Prohibition of Local Ordinances or Regulations Governing Equipment Fuel-Sources**

Prohibits cities from adopting or enforcing ordinances or regulations that restrict residents from selling, purchasing, or owning equipment or vehicles based on their fuel source.

*Creates new Sections 214A.41 through 214A.43 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*



## Public Safety & Pensions

### **HF 297** | Dual-Role Volunteer Emergency Providers and City Council Members Allowance & Establishment of Special Savings Account for Major Public Safety Equipment

Allows a city officer or employee who also serves as a volunteer firefighter or EMS provider to receive nominal compensation, stipends, incentives, or benefits from their volunteer role, even though they are otherwise employed or serve the city. In cases where the dual role involves serving as chief of the volunteer fire department, the city council must approve the arrangement by a majority vote, with the individual in question abstaining from the vote if they are a member of the council. The law also authorizes cities to establish a special savings account dedicated to the purchase, possession, and maintenance of major public safety equipment for police, fire, or EMS services. Funds deposited in this account may be carried forward across fiscal years and are exempt from reversion to the general fund, but must be used exclusively for qualifying public safety equipment purchases.

*Amends Sections 362.5, 372.13, and 384.3 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

### **HF 793** | Firefighter Certification & Service Preventions

Directs the Department of Public Safety to revise its rules by January 1, 2026, to prohibit any individual who is required to be listed on the sex offender registry from being certified as a firefighter or serving as a noncertified or volunteer firefighter. This applies to both current and prospective firefighters.

*Amends DPS administrative rules Chapter 71 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

### **HF 969** | Covered Cancer Definition Expansion and Public Safety Pension Employee Contribution Increase

Expands the definition of covered cancers for firefighters under both the IPERS and MFPRSI benefits programs to include all types of cancers, broadening eligibility for related benefits. The law also adjusts pension contribution rates for public safety employees enrolled in IPERS or MFPRSI, increasing the employee contribution rate by 0.125% beginning July 1, 2025, and for all fiscal years thereafter. To offset this charge, the employer contribution rate will decrease by 0.125% over the same period.

*Amends Sections 97A.1, 97A.8, 97B.11, 411.1, and 411.8 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

### **HF 1002** | Establishment of Length of Service Award Programs (LOSAP) for Volunteer Emergency Responders

Authorizes cities to establish a LOSAP for volunteer firefighters, EMS providers, and reserve peace officers. If a city chooses to establish a LOSAP, it must develop program guidelines in consultation with the chief or commanding officer of the relevant volunteer department. These guidelines must address eligibility criteria, vesting requirements, distribution rules, and other operational details. The Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA) will administer the fund and provide a dollar-for-dollar state match for city contributions, up to \$500 per participant annually. For cities with an annual budget under \$100,000, the state will instead provide a \$3-to-\$1 match, subject to the same \$500 per-person annual cap. Cities may use general fund dollars or other lawful sources, including gifts, bequests, or donations, to finance their share of the program.

*Creates Sections 100B.51 and 100B.52 | Effective Date July 1, 2025*

**SF 659 | Standing Appropriations - Fire Protection and 911 Services**

Appropriates funding for a range of programs, agencies, and projects, including two provisions of note for local government. First, it directs the State Fire Marshal to conduct a study analyzing whether a countywide structure for fire protection services would improve coverage and reduce emergency response times. The study will include at least one representative from a city with a population of 37,000 or more and one from a city with a population of 5,000 or less. It will examine the upfront and ongoing costs of implementing such a framework, current service coverage and response times, staffing and equipment needs, communication and dispatch challenges, and similar frameworks in other states, particularly in the Midwest. The study will provide a recommendation on whether to implement such a countywide framework in Iowa, with funding due to the Legislature by June 30, 2026. Also included is a reimbursement clause for the Department of Homeland Security and Emergency Management. Specifically, each joint 911 service board must reimburse the Department for undefined “reasonable costs” associated with facilitating 911 call traffic within 30 days of receiving a reimbursement request.

*Amends Section 34A.12 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

---

**Miscellaneous**


---

**SF 383 | Pharmacy Benefit Managers Regulations**

Establishes regulations for pharmacy benefits managers (PBMs), focusing on transparency in prescription drug pricing and reimbursement practices. Key provisions include prohibiting PBMs from discriminating against pharmacies, requiring them to use pass-through pricing, and requiring all rebates to be passed on to health carriers or employee plan sponsors. The law also outlines the rights of pharmacies and pharmacists, ensuring they are not unfairly restricted in their participation in health benefit plans. For city governments, this may require adjustments in how city health plans are structured and managed, potentially leading to increased administrative responsibilities to ensure compliance with the new regulations.

*Amends Chapter 510B | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

**SF 583 | Iowa School Safety Enhancement**

Establishes “multidisciplinary school safety assessment teams,” which will be responsible for coordinating resources between institutions and assessing situations where a student may be exhibiting threatening behavior towards a school’s employees or students. City representatives on such a team may include local law enforcement officials.

*Creates Section 29D.1 and amends Sections 256E.7 and 280.36 | Effective Date: July 1, 2025*

**SF 75 | County Supervisor Representation and Vacancy Act**

Requires counties that contain a Regents University’s main campus to adopt Plan 3 supervisor district representation, in which supervisors are elected from single-member, equal population districts, with one supervisor elected per district. This change takes effect beginning with the 2026 general election and eliminates at-large or cumulative voting models in those counties. The law also modifies vacancy procedures for county boards of supervisors in counties with populations over 125,000 and in counties containing a Regents University’s main campus, aligning them with the new district-based structure.

*Amends Sections 331.206 through 331.207, 43.6, and 69.14A | Effective Date: April 10, 2025*

*\*\*\*Note: Listed amended code sections may not be comprehensive.*