



STAFF PHOTO BY ALEX MILLER

CML Executive Director Kevin Bommer speaks at the 2025 Legislative Workshop at History Colorado in Denver.

Municipal leaders unite at CML workshop to tackle advocacy challenges and legislative priorities

By DENISE WHITE, CML ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Over 130 municipal leaders from across Colorado convened at the annual Colorado Municipal League’s Legislative Workshop to sharpen their advocacy skills and gain insights into key legislative issues impacting local governments.

The event kicked off with a tour of the Colorado State Capitol, where attendees heard from House Speaker Julie McCluskie and other state representatives. Heather Stauffer, CML’s legislative advocacy manager, stressed the importance of sustained engagement with lawmakers.

“This shouldn’t be the first or last time you talk with your legislators,” she said.

At History Colorado, CML’s advocacy team provided a legislative update, highlighting the challenges of the 2025 General Assembly session, particularly budget constraints.

“This is going to be a tough year for everyone, not just local governments,” Stauffer said. She explained that bills with fiscal impacts face significant hurdles

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

EMPOWERED CITIES AND TOWNS, UNITED FOR A STRONG COLORADO



COLORADO
MUNICIPAL
LEAGUE **NEWSLETTER**

CML Newsletter (ISSN 7439903) is published biweekly by the Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203-2207, for Colorado's municipal officials. (USPS 075-590) Periodical postage paid in Denver, Colorado.

Editor: Denise White
Designer: Alex Miller
Circulation/mailling lists: Mark Vanderbrook

POSTMASTER: Send address change form 3579 to Colorado Municipal League, 1144 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203-2207; (p) 303-831-6411 / 866-578-0936; (f) 303-860-8175.

Subscription to CML Newsletter is offered as a portion of member dues.

Get this newsletter by email. The CML Newsletter is available by email three days before it arrives in the mail! Sign up at bit.ly/CMLNewsletter.

CML STAFF ANNIVERSARIES



CML is celebrating a staff anniversary this month. Meetings & Events Planner Karen Rosen is celebrating her fifth year with the League. Congratulations, Karen!

CELEBRATE WITH CML

CML wants to hear about your community's success. Tell us about a grant you've won, a new water tank, or anything else you're excited about. Email CML Publication & Design Specialist Alex Miller, amiller@cml.org, to have your community's news featured in the CML Newsletter.

MUNICIPAL UPDATES

LITTLETON

Littleton Museum Survey. The Littleton Museum is seeking feedback from visitors and residents in its annual Survey of Museum-Goers. Responses help guide museum programming and exhibits. Take the survey online at tinyurl.com/9shhu7da.

LAKESWOOD

Tree sale for residents. To expand the tree canopy within privately owned areas of Lakewood, the city is selling trees to residents at a discounted price during the annual Tree Sale, which began March 3.

New accessible programs. Clements Community Center is now offering new adaptive and accessible alternatives for community members with a disability. Accessible tai chi, DanceAbility, self-defense workshops, and R.I.S.E. dances are available.

Governor visits 40 West gallery. Gov. Jared Polis recently visited Next Gallery in Lakewood's 40 West Arts District to see the eighth annual Casa Bonita Art Show. The show brought together more than 60 artists to imagine and create a piece of what Casa Bonita could look like in 2074, on its 100th birthday.

COLORADO SPRINGS

Farewell to City Forester Dennis Will. After 20 years of dedicated service, City Forester Dennis Will is retiring. His passion for trees has shaped the landscape of Colorado Springs — quite literally. From conducting field surveys to assessing forest health, Dennis has been the driving force behind decisions that have strengthened and grown the city's tree canopy.

Tejon Street Revitalization Project. City of Colorado Springs and Downtown Partnership officials announced that the Tejon Street Revitalization Project is scheduled to begin on March 24, with the goals of boosting public safety, increasing accessibility, and growing business activity.

DIGITAL NEWSLETTER

The CML Newsletter is going fully digital. Starting this year, new CML members and associate members will receive the newsletter exclusively by email, with an option to temporarily opt-out and request a printed copy. Later this year, as part of a planned transition, everyone will begin to receive the CML Newsletter by email only, and the League will cease printing it altogether. The decision to go fully digital reflects a commitment to using member resources more effectively. Utilizing electronic communication saves time and resources. In the future, you can expect the PDF version of the newsletter to shift to a true e-newsletter that is more accessible and compatible with electronic devices. Questions or requests to start receiving CML Newsletter via email right away should be sent to cml@cml.org.

Registration is now open for 2025 CML Annual Conference!

By Karen Rosen, CML meetings & events planner

Register now for the CML Annual Conference, happening June 24-27 in beautiful Breckenridge, Colorado. Register online at www.cml.org/conference.

This is CML's signature training event of the year, where municipal officials from across the state come together to learn, share ideas, and build connections. The conference features informative sessions designed to tackle the important issues municipal leaders face every day. But what really sets it apart is the chance to connect with peers from other communities who are navigating similar challenges. You'll leave with fresh ideas, new contacts, and practical takeaways to bring back to your community.

CML is excited to announce that we're offering 10 conference scholarships to attend the 2025 CML Annual Conference. The scholarships cover your registra-



tion, lodging (arranged by CML at the host hotel), travel stipend, and a ticket to the Wednesday Welcome & Sam Mamet Good Governance Award Luncheon and Thursday Meeting of the Minds Luncheon, along with a ticket for one of the following: Elected Officials Breakfast, Managers Breakfast or Attorneys Luncheon on Friday.

Scholarships are open to all members, including managers, clerks, mayors, councilmembers, town board members, and department heads.

Municipalities that received a scholarship in 2024 are not eligible this year. Only one application per municipality will be considered.

More information and an application for the scholarship are available on the CML website, cml.org/conference. Scholarship applications must include all necessary paperwork and be returned to CML by March 3. Incomplete applications will not be considered. If you have any questions about the conference or scholarships, please contact Karen Rosen at krosen@cml.org.

Don't miss this amazing opportunity to grow professionally, make valuable connections, and bring back new ideas to strengthen your community!

Nominations are now open for 2025 Sam Mamet Good Governance Award

Celebrate outstanding municipal leadership! The 2025 Sam Mamet Good Governance Award honors Colorado municipal officials and staff who exemplify transparency, accountability, innovation, and ethical leadership.

WHO CAN BE NOMINATED?

Elected officials, municipal staff, or public service leaders, such as board members or volunteers, actively serving in their role at the time of nomination. (Current Executive Board members are not eligible.)

HOW ARE WINNERS RECOGNIZED?

Recipients will be honored at the 2025 CML Annual Conference in Breckenridge, receive a commemorative award, complimentary registration to the 2026 conference, and recognition in regional media.

NOMINATE A LEADER TODAY!

Nominations accepted through March 28; submit at tinyurl.com/bdd3e2sv.

Become an Annual Conference sponsor

Looking to increase your organization's exposure to influential decision makers in Colorado's cities and towns?

Become a sponsor of the Colorado Municipal League Annual Conference. CML associate members receive a discount on all conference sponsorship opportunities. Sponsors exhibit space is limited and sold on a first-come, first-served basis.

More information on sponsorships is available at CML's website, www.cml.org/conference/2025-sponsor-opportunities. CML's sponsor guide, which includes sponsor application materials, is online at tinyurl.com/yunbyrm8.



STAFF PHOTOS BY ALEX MILLER

The CML advocacy team, from left, Legislative Advocacy Manager Heather Stauffer and Legislative and Policy Advocates Jeremy Schupbach, Beverly Stables, and Elizabeth Haskell, give a presentation on state legislation and how it affects local governments.

FROM PAGE 1

unless they were already prioritized before the session.

The workshop also focused on practical advocacy strategies. CML Executive Director Kevin Bommer emphasized the power of grassroots efforts, urging attendees to testify, send letters, and maintain regular contact with legislators. Irma Esparza Diggs, senior executive and director of federal advocacy for the National League of Cities, advised turning opposition into dialogue by asking opponents why they disagree.

Storytelling emerged as a key advocacy tool. Todd Barnes, communications

director for Thornton, encouraged participants to craft compelling messages.

“Why does this matter? Why are you here? Make it resonate,” he said.

An afternoon panel on criminal justice legislation featured insights from Chris Howes of the Colorado Retail Council, Judge Katie Kurtz of Arvada, Liz Rogers of Aurora, and Police Chief Adam Turk of Greeley. They discussed the municipal implications of 2025 criminal justice bills and how to effectively communicate their impact to communities.

The day concluded with a federal advocacy update from Diggs, who highlighted the Biden administration’s unprecedented direct investments in local governments.

She also addressed the shifting policy landscape under the new Trump administration, noting its rapid pace.

“This administration hit the ground running—they learned lessons from the first term and came ready to move,” she said.

Diggs emphasized that the National League of Cities remains focused on supporting local decision-making and addressing community needs.

Attendees left the workshop better equipped with actionable strategies to strengthen their advocacy efforts. For updates on the 2025 session, visit CML’s Advocacy page and sign up for the Statehouse Report, www.cml.org/home/advocacy-legal.



Workshop attendees walk to the state Capitol for a tour.



Audience members listen to a presentation during the workshop.

Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper launch CDS application form

By Kevin Bommer, CML executive director

Senators Michael Bennet and John Hickenlooper recently announced the immediate opening of their joint Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) fiscal year 2026 (FY26) request form. The application will be open until March 24 at 5 p.m.

CDS is a mechanism by which members of Congress can request funding for specific projects in their home state. In recent years, nonprofits, state, local, and Tribal government entities have been eligible for consideration.

The joint application form means that applicants only need to complete one application that will be received by both

offices. Each senator will then review requests and submit to the Senate Committee on Appropriations individually.

The application can be found online at tinyurl.com/2s3d8tdt.

Both offices ask that applicants ensure their submission is consistent with the guidelines set by the Senate Committee on Appropriations, based off of FY25 committee guidance. Staff will review all requests and ensure they comply with FY26 Senate guidance once it is released.

Currently, Senate and House leaders have not confirmed the availability of funding and eligibility for this year's pro-

cess. Updates will be provided as details become more clear.

Please note that last year's requests are still in the final appropriations bills, but they are still working their way through the process. Applicants with projects included in FY25 draft appropriations bills should resubmit their applications if they are still seeking funding. All requests for CDS must include one letter of support from either state, local, or tribal governments or community leaders that details the community benefits and support for the project.

If you have any questions, please review the updated FAQ document, tinyurl.com/yeymwj3p.

Join us for the 2025

CML ANNUAL CONFERENCE



COLORADO
MUNICIPAL
LEAGUE



BRECKENRIDGE
UNITED FOR A STRONG COLORADO » JUNE 24-27 2025

Serve on Closed Landfill Remediation Grant advisory board

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) would like to notify you about an opportunity to serve as a member on the Closed Landfill Remediation Grant Program Advisory Committee.

The Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 23-1194 during the 2023 legislative session. The legislation created the Closed Landfill Remediation Grant Program to provide funding to eligible local governments to help pay the costs of environmental remediation and mitigation efforts for and management

of closed landfills that are owned by the eligible local governments to protect the public health, safety, and welfare and the environment.

The advisory committee is responsible for reviewing grant applications and making recommendations to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment for approval, partial approval, or denial of the grants. The Advisory Committee is made up of five members: two members representing local government, two members representing CDPHE, and one member with technical expertise who

is not affiliated with a local government or with CDPHE.

There is an opening for the technical member position. The term begins upon appointment as a member through Feb. 28, 2027 (approximately two years) and would be involved in reviewing applications for Grant Cycle No. 2. If you are interested in serving as the technical member on the Advisory Committee, please complete the application available on the Closed Landfill Remediation Grant Program webpage, tinyurl.com/2akyyfes. Applications will be accepted through March 28.

Funding opportunities open through June 30 at Division of Housing

The Division of Housing, part of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, has opened funding opportunities for grants and loans, through June 30.

The Division of Housing is anticipating up to \$134 million of funds being made available to award to projects and programs throughout State Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025).

The development of scoring criteria is actively underway as the division has

shifted to quarterly, competitive application cycles for rental and homeownership projects. Any funds that are not awarded at the end of a cycle will roll forward to a future round. The division will communicate whether funds rolled forward to ensure applicants know of the additional availability of funds.

The Letter of Interest deadline will be 45 days prior to the application deadline to allow time for letters to be published to

the division's website for transparency. After submitting an application for one or more of the below funding cycles, applicants can expect their application to be reviewed by the division and State Housing Board. If deemed complete, a decision regarding an award will be made and the applicant notified.

The complete funding calendar is available on the Division of Housing website, tinyurl.com/yc5u4ybb.

NLC CONGRESSIONAL [★]20 March
CITY CONFERENCE [★]25 10-12

EXECUTIVE EDUCATION AND PRE-CONFERENCE ACTIVITIES: MARCH 8-9 WASHINGTON, DC

Where passion meets purpose.

Learn from federal leaders,
policy experts and peers.

CML LEGAL CORNER



How do municipalities police labor strikes?

Taylor McGaughey, CML law clerk

Municipal law enforcement often finds itself between workers and management during labor strikes. This became apparent this February when many King Soopers' employees along the front range went on strike.

Policing labor strikes will continue to be a topic municipalities must address. While most municipalities have a well thought through approach, if not cautious, officers might violate state law and constitutional rights when policing disputes between employees, business owners, and patrons.

LEGAL AUTHORITY TO STRIKE

The First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and Article II, Section 10 of the Colorado Constitution guarantee the rights of people to protest and strike (with some restrictions). The Colorado Supreme Court has made clear that protesters may assemble and express themselves in public areas. Some restrictions on strikes by law enforcement may constitute a free speech violation.

Federal and state laws explicitly allow workers to engage in strikes. Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) provides a strong mandate that the Act be construed in such a manner as not "to interfere with or impede or diminish in any way the right to strike." 29 U.S.C.S. § 163. The Colorado Labor and Peace Act (LPA) allows employees to engage in lawful, concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection, which includes striking. C.R.S. § 8-3-106.

WHERE AND WHEN CAN STRIKERS PROTEST?

Strikers are free to assemble in public spaces, which are typically publicly

owned areas traditionally open to the public, including streets, sidewalks, and parks. Even in traditional public spaces there are some restrictions on where strikers may protest. Authorities may limit where strikers protest if there is a significant governmental interest and there are alternative areas in the general vicinity where strikers may protest. For example, the LPA prevents strikers from obstructing entrances of businesses and blocking public roads. C.R.S. § 8-3-108(2)(f), (g).

Some ambiguity surrounds how and to what degree strikers can be on shopping complex sidewalks, parking lots, and in front of stores. The recent temporary restraining order from the King Soopers strike only enjoined strikers from blocking delivery vehicles and erecting temporary structures or piles of trash on the sidewalk in front of King Soopers such that they impede either traffic or pedestrian access to the store.

A municipality may limit the times when strikers protest. Such a restriction is only valid if it is content neutral and promotes a substantial governmental interest, while leaving ample alternatives to protest. For example, a municipality could likely prevent strikers protesting at night in a public park that closes after sunset for public safety and maintenance reasons.

Free speech and assembly protections do not typically extend to private spaces, such as private businesses. However, the Colorado Supreme Court has expanded speech protections beyond explicitly owned public areas. In *Bock v. Westminster Mall Co.*, 819 P.2d 55 (Colo. 1991), the court held that where a private entity is heavily subsidized by a governmental entity, or where a private entity operates in such a manner that it performs a virtual public function, the public will be granted free speech in such places.

HOW CAN STRIKERS EXPRESS THEMSELVES?

Courts are hesitant to restrict the content or viewpoint of strikers. The use of provocative and offensive speech is typically allowed. If strikers use curse words or have provocative images on their signs, an officer cannot restrict this type of expression.

Officers may intervene in cases where there is a risk that protester or management expression is directed at inciting imminent lawless action and will likely result in lawless action. Also, Colorado law prevents strikers from coercing or intimidating other employees in the enjoyment of their legal rights. C.R.S. § 8-3-108(2)(a). This means, strikers cannot use threatening messages to prevent other workers from going to work.

Restrictions can be placed on speakers and microphones. Such restrictions must be content neutral, meaning officers cannot limit what is said, but officers could require strikers to lower the volume of a speaker if it exceeds the decibels allowed in the applicable noise law. In addition to ensuring content neutrality, enforcement should be uniform to deter equal protection challenges.

STRIKES IN THE FUTURE

If a municipality has not already done so, it should meet with management and union leadership to come to an understanding about strikers' permitted locations and expression. Municipal attorneys should brief officers about the rights and limitations of protesters. By taking these steps, municipalities can balance the rights of people to strike and the interests of business owners and patrons.

This column is not intended and should not be taken as legal advice. Municipal officials are always encouraged to consult with their own attorneys.



COLORADO
MUNICIPAL
LEAGUE

USPS 075-590

Periodical postage
PAID
at Denver, Colorado

1144 Sherman St. • Denver, CO • 80203-2207

- CML members sharpen advocacy skills at Legislative Workshop
- Registration is now open for CML Annual Conference
- Sens. Bennet and Hickenlooper launch CDS application form
- Legal Corner: How do municipalities police labor strikes?

Featured in this issue

Vol. 51, No. 5, March 7, 2025

NEWSLETTER

COLORADO
MUNICIPAL
LEAGUE

