

AWC 2026 Federal Legislative Priorities

Washington cities support federal policies that promote community-based decision-making and provide direct federal funding to cities to support critical local services and oppose those that undermine local government regulatory authority, impose unfunded mandates, or preempt local government revenues and revenue authorities.

In 2026, Washington's cities & towns ask Congress to:

Continue federal funding and support for local disaster response and recovery

- Provide critical leadership to assist local governments when community resources are overwhelmed.

Support housing construction and affordability

- Adopt policy approaches such as those in the Renewing Opportunity in the American Dream (ROAD) to Housing Act that address housing affordability by boosting supply, modernizing financing options, reducing regulatory barriers, promoting economic mobility, and enhancing program oversight and coordination.

Act on transportation funding reauthorization

- Work to strengthen partnerships with cities to build and maintain a safer, faster, and stronger transportation system to advance public safety and economic competitiveness.
- Preserve current federal fuel taxes and other user fees to fund the Highway Trust Fund (HTF), index federal fuel taxes for inflation in future years, and support a sustainable revenue model to fund the HTF that provides adequate resources to maintain and improve aging transportation infrastructure.

In addition to the three priorities above, we also ask our federal government partners to:

Preserve local fiscal sustainability and regulatory efforts

- Preserve and expand the Community Development Block Grant program.
- Continue to find opportunities to provide direct flexible funding to cities.
- Preserve the tax exemption on all municipal bonds and restore the tax exemption for advance refunding bonds.
- Continue support for the Public Service Loan Forgiveness program and include sectors with workforce shortages that are critical to providing public services.
- Uphold local control over local public rights-of-way to balance community interests with private utilities infrastructure.

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Maintain stable and reliable federal government operations

- Adopt timely funding measures to avoid fiscal uncertainty for our cities, residents, and businesses.



Invest in affordable housing

- Support a comprehensive federal housing policy that preserves local decision-making while making substantial federal investments in housing.
- Take federal action to prevent price fixing in the rental housing industry.
- Expand flexibility and increase effectiveness of Medicaid funding by allowing funding for housing and in-home health care services.



Invest in local public infrastructure and transportation systems

- Provide sustainable, direct, and flexible funding to help cities of all sizes meet basic infrastructure needs. Streamline applications and provide technical assistance for federal grants.
- Streamline federal permitting requirements to reduce project costs and implementation time.
- Provide resources for cities to address PFAS in their water systems. Ensure cities are recognized as “passive receivers” of PFAS and receive a narrow exemption from liability.
- Support cities in implementing smart city technology, digital safety, and cybersecurity to protect vulnerable infrastructure.
- Continue federal investment to expand broadband access in unserved and underserved areas.
- Invest in culvert replacement and removal for both state and local governments.

- Increase passenger and freight rail safety and connectivity through modern safety practices and policy tools, including incentivizing rail operators to introduce effective technology solutions.



Promote public safety and healthy communities

- Support evidence-based efforts to stop trafficking of illegal drugs, including fentanyl. Invest in improvements for behavioral health and local response to the opioid crisis. Provide resources to recruit, train, and retain first responders and support alternative response programs.
- Provide direct public safety funding to cities to support violence prevention and reduction programs.
- Support changes to federal banking regulations to give access to state-licensed cannabis businesses.
- Support programs to improve affordability and reduce poverty including household utility assistance, nutrition assistance, and removing the marriage penalty in disability income.
- Invest in more funding to expand availability of childcare for working families.
- Address immigration holistically to recognize the needs of our state and local economies. Streamline the ability for individuals to be able to legally contribute to local economies. Provide coordination and resources to prevent financial strain on cities.



Support the National League of Cities' National Municipal Policy and Resolutions

- Support the recommendations of NLC in the absence of feedback from Washington's cities and towns.

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