



Mayor Bill Chegwidden,  
League President

## President's Note:

It's that time again: Conference Registration is open! We have a new registration system that promises to be easy-to-use and convenient for you and your team to claim your places at the must-attend local government event of the year. I'm looking forward to seeing you all there in the sold-out Exhibit Hall, in the classrooms, and at League Events throughout the Conference.

We have some new programs in the works, including roundtables on hot topics for municipalities. Also, the League's Education Foundation will be holding its second breakfast and workshop to kick the Conference off on Tuesday morning (November 19). There will be more information on these Conference extras in the months to come.

In the meantime, help shape the League's legislative goals in 2025 by submitting a Conference Resolution. If there is there a topic that you think the League should be considering because it will improve local government, or it addresses an issue affecting local governance, I encourage you to [submit a draft resolution](#). All submissions are reviewed by League staff, and when selected, resolutions are presented at the Conference Resolutions Committee meeting held during the Conference at 3 p.m. on Tuesday. You can review more on the [Conference Resolutions Process](#) on the Conference website.

On a personal note, as you are enjoying the summer breeze and start planning for the fall, I would like to invite you to attend the annual [Hog Wild Wharton](#) charity cook off event on September 14 at the Betty Poyer Field in Wharton. And for those who moonlight as chefs, consider entering the contest.

## Action List: August

1. [Register](#) for the Annual League Conference (this should all be the link text) and take advantage of Early Bird Pricing.
2. Submit a [Conference Resolution to Ric](#) by the first Friday of October or submit your [RroRosed Conference Resolution](#) by the third Friday of October.
3. [Review the NJ SuRreme Court's affirmation of a decision on BPPT from the ARRelate Division\(Verizon New JerseY. v. Borough of HoRewell \[PDF\]\)](#) regarding the ability of municipalities to collect the Business Personal Property Tax (BPPT) from Incumbent Local Exchange Carriers (ILEC).
4. Another [NJ SuRreme Court item to examine:](#) the appeal in the [Rise Against Hate v. Cherry Hill et al., case was dismissed.](#) The Court had originally granted certification in the matter, which is now dismissing the case after finding certification was improvidently granted.
5. [Download the New Jersey Interagency Council on Climate Resilience's Extreme Heat Resilience Action Plan \(PDF\).](#) to better understand the numerous opportunities for municipal engagement and support in addressing extreme heat impacts at the local level.

## Learning Opportunities

### Webinar

The Future of OPRA

#### When

Wednesda, August28

#### Description

This webinar will explore the changes to OPRA as a result of the signing of P.L. 2024, c. 16 and effective on September 3, 2024. Attendees will receive information on those changes, which include new exemptions, changes in custodial procedures and requirements, and as well as significant changes to the Government Records Council (GRC) and its complaint process. The GRC will also address attendee questions posed during the presentation.

#### Registration

Fill out and return [The Future of OPRA registration \(PDF\)](#) form to participate.

### Municipal Management Seminar Series

NJLM and NJ Community Solutions present Municipal Management Program Part 4- Council Relations Series

#### Description

NJLM has partnered with NJ Community Solutions to provide a new educational program that will teach individuals about the practical side of managing municipalities in New Jersey. The Municipal Management Workshops are a series of three-hour practical educational sessions. Each session will be held in-person in small class sizes to provide

opportunities to learn, discuss and question key aspects of managing a New Jersey municipality.

Starting on September 10, 2024, the fourth series to be offered will cover a broad range of issues regarding Council Relations. Included will be communications, managing a split council, agenda prep, community relations, and setting expectations.

### **Registration**

Visit the League's [Seminar Calendar](#) for registration information.

## **Grant Center Spotlight**

### **USDOT FY2024 Reconnecting Communities Pilot Grant Program**

The US Department of Transportation has released the [2024 Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot \(RCP\) Program](#), Fiscal Years (FY) 2024-2026 funding.

The BIL established the [Reconnecting Communities Pilot \(RCP\)](#) Grant Program to help reconnect communities previously cut off from economic opportunities by transportation infrastructure. The goal of the program is to advance community-centered transportation connection projects that improve access to daily needs such as jobs, education, healthcare, food, nature, and recreation, and foster equitable development and restoration.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law authorized \$1 billion in grant funding from FY 2022-26 for planning, construction and technical assistance. \$607 million is remaining, all of which will be awarded under this NOFO.

### **Application**

Visit the [Reconnecting Communities Pilot \(RCP\) Program - How to Apply](#) page for information.

### **Due Date**

September 30, 2024

*For more grant news, please visit the [League's Grant Resource Center](#).*

## **Get to Know Your Executive Board**

### **Councilperson Ruby Cotton**

Ruby Cotton was elected Councilperson of the 4th Ward in Paterson during the 2012 Municipal Election. She was re-elected in 2016, 2020, and 2024, and also became the



Councilperson Ruby Cotten,  
Paterson

City of Paterson First Female African American Mayor in September 2017. She has been a member of the NJLM Executive Board since 2021.

As a member of the City Council, she has chaired Public Safety, Department of Public Works, Community Development, Finance, Legal, as well as a member of the Street Naming Committee. Ruby retired on July 31, 2015, from Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission after working more than 22 years. She is now a full-time 4th Ward Councilwoman.

Ruby's work began when she served as a Home School Liaison for Paterson Public Schools. She was a Sales Representative for U.S. Cable, and an Office Manager for the insurance firm Scriven, Cockfield, Cotton and McCaskill. Ruby is also a licensed Real Estate Agent. Ruby's involvement in the community started in the early '90s, when she worked with Marilyn Wilcox to start the Fourth Ward Coalition. The coalition collected clothes and monetary resources for fire victims throughout the Fourth Ward.

Ruby has been involved in the educational system for over 40 years, beginning with the enrollment of her children into the school district. Ruby became president of the Home School Council at Public School Number 13, Eastside High School, and Rosa Parks Performing Arts High School, and served on the Schools Leadership Team.

A tireless volunteer, Ruby was selected interim Chairperson for the National Coalition for Early Secondary Education Association (ESEA) Title I, Parents for Region II. She participated in many hearings and marches in Trenton, and throughout the state, as an advocate for all Abbott School Districts and their children.

Ruby's activities extend beyond the educational system. She is a member of New A.M.E. Zion Church in Paterson and served in some capacity as a host of Educational Team, Women's Day, and working on Stewardship, Paterson Public School District Literacy Team and High School/Small School Initiatives.

She has also served as part of the State of NJ Bethune Heights Recognition Program; Passaic County African American Women Inc.; Jump Start Community Action; Commissioner, Passaic Valley Water Commission; Hearts of Hannah Women Center; Parents Leadership Alliance; National Council of Negro Women, Inc.; Gold Life Member of the NAACP, Paterson Branch; and Grandparents Relative Resources Center.

Ruby is a member of Band Against Neighborhood Destruction and Barbour Park Association. Ruby's other volunteer activities include working closely with Councilwoman Vera Ames-Garnes with her Thanksgiving and Christmas projects held at Masonic Temple, Integrity Lodge #51 assisting with the Annual Dinner and providing clothing for the needy at Eastside High School.

She has received numerous awards and recognition, including Volunteer of the Year by Senator John Girgenti's Civic League; "Unsung Hero" by the Passaic County African American Women, Inc.; and the Florence Letcher Tom Community Service Award from Delta Theta Sorority, Inc., Paterson Alumnae Chapter. She also received the Community Service Award from the Frederick "Fred" Jordan Memorial Scholarship Committee, and Honorary Grand Marshall African Heritage Parade. She also in the Hall of Fame Public School #6.

Ruby N. Cotton was born to David and Carrie Coleman, in Bishopville, South Carolina. Ruby's family moved to Paterson, New Jersey when she was just three years old. She is a graduate of Public School Number 6 in 1967. Ruby went on to attend Eastside High School, where she graduated in 1971. She then attended Passaic County Community College, taking classes in accounting.

Ruby was happily married to Edward Cotton, Jr., for over 45 years, who passed away April 17, 2020. They have three children, their daughters, Candice and Danielle, and son, Edward 111, as well as four grandchildren, Arnier, Emajee, Amis, and Juni.



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## Magazine Moment

[The 2025 NJ MunicipaRalities Editorial Calendar \(PDF\)](#), is set. Haven't written for the magazine before? This is the perfect time to start. And if you've written for the magazine previously, welcome back. We're committed to sharing your success stories and concerns in the form of articles and op-eds for the publication. See the [author's guidelines](#) for more information. Submit your queries, news items, op-eds, or articles for *NJ Municipalities* magazine [QY\\_email to Amy Riezio.](#)

We're now seeking submissions for ours October (due August 12), November (due September 15), and December (due October 15) issues. Please consider writing an article for the magazine.

### Want to support the League's official publication?

If your municipality has recently used a vendor and feel that their services would benefit other municipalities, [email Tasneem KaRadia](#), Advertising Manager, with their details so she can send them information about the League's magazine. Advertising in *NJ Municipalities* magazine promotes their services and could benefit other towns.

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