



SOUTH DAKOTA CITIES UNITED: **OUR ROADMAP AHEAD**

SOUTH DAKOTA MUNICIPAL LEAGUE STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2028

This strategic plan identifies the shared priorities of the South Dakota Municipal League based on input from members, the Board of Trustees, and staff. The plan is designed to be fluid, adaptable, and uncomplicated, and can evolve based on progress, conditions, and needs of the League.

The plan develops a strategic framework that strengthens our voice, deepens our member engagement, and prepares our league for the opportunities ahead.

Four themes form the core of the plan:

- **Connect** members, partners, and ideas to foster growth and innovation.
- **Educate** members to develop effective public servants and leadership skills.
- **Advocate** for the people of our cities with a strong, collective voice.
- **Mission Driven**, with clearly defined strategic plans and priorities.

Each theme is supported by specific framework:

- **Priority** – The highest importance. While the priority of each theme is presented independently of each other, all are interconnected and intrinsically related to the overall plan.
- **Strategy** – The roadmap for achieving priorities. Strategies are achieved through deliberate action and identifying appropriate goals as a guide. Strategies are flexible - they adapt and adjust to changing and evolving conditions in the organization, business, and priorities of the League and its members.
- **Outcomes** – The desired result. Ultimately, the outcomes address the most significant immediate changes and issues of the SDML for the plan timeframe.
- **Goals** – Initial action items to reach the desired outcomes. They are tracked and measured and will evolve and change throughout the three years. When current goals are achieved or priorities change, new goals can be added and current ones can be replaced. Goals are a combination of maintaining essential ongoing activities and implementing new ideas.



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CONNECT members, partners, and ideas to foster growth and innovation.

Priority: Be the trusted source for connecting members with information, support, and assistance.

Strategy: Connect members, partners, and affiliates to foster growth and innovation.

OUTCOMES

- A realistic and practical plan to increase the Board's and staff's personal connections with members.
- Strong and effective partnerships with affiliates that complement and support one another.
- Modern and user-friendly website, League communications, and social media tools.

GOALS

- ☐ Create a directive/script containing essential member information to use when meeting with members in person.
- ☐ Create an onboarding process for affiliate board members to provide consistency.
- ☐ Evaluate forum and communication alternatives.

EDUCATE members to develop effective public servants and leadership skills.

Priority: Foster informed, trained, and engaged members.

Strategy: Develop effective meetings, tools, and trainings to promote public servants and leadership skills.

OUTCOMES

- A training curriculum built on real-time knowledge of member needs.
- A well-balanced portfolio of in person, online, and virtual educational tools and trainings.
- Increased participation and attendance at district meeting and the annual conference.

GOALS

- ☐ Create a member survey to gather data on member needs and preferences.
- ☐ Overall trainings should be comprised of 50% in person, 25% online, and 25% hybrid.
- ☐ Reformat district meetings to be more of a learning opportunity: include a moderator to address or facilitate conversations regarding issues within the district, discuss select legislative topics in depth, provide ample time for questions.

ADVOCATE for the people of our cities with a strong collective voice.

Priority: Be a unified and effective advocate for all South Dakota cities.

Strategy: Create coalitions with members, city officials, legislators, and other partners to be a strong, collective voice.

OUTCOMES

- Recognized as a collaborative, non-partisan expert as well as a trusted advocate on municipal issues.
- Members and city officials actively engaged in the legislative process.
- A positive and productive relationship with legislators and the Governor's Office.

GOALS

- ☐ Create a Legislative Impact Task Force.
- ☐ Establish Friday legislative calls at noon in addition to the weekly legislative update email.
- ☐ Increase connections at Rib Dinner: aid members in identifying their legislator, actively introduce members to their legislators.

MISSION DRIVEN with clearly defined strategic plans and priorities.

Priority: Be a cohesive and effective organization with clearly defined strategic plans and priorities.

Strategy: Build and sustain a united and collaborative board and staff team.

OUTCOMES

- A strong, yet flexible culture that adapts and changes with the needs of members.
- An engaged and empowered board that provides strategic direction and leadership.
- Experienced, confident, and energized staff.

GOALS

- ☐ Continual review of the strategic plan, goal meeting, and yearly membership feedback.
- ☐ Have board members reach out to other communities in their district and encourage them to attend trainings/events and share any issues they may be seeing. Additionally, provide written staff updates at each meeting with the staff attending in-person as able.
- ☐ Require staff to participate in one approved continuing education/professional development training or program each year, schedule one day a month for staff connection.