



# Cities Lead 2016

THE **P**UBLIC SAFETY, INFRASTRUCTURE  
AND **E**CONOMY PLAYBOOK



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**THIS YEAR, THE NATION WILL ELECT A NEW PRESIDENT WHO WILL SET THE PRIORITIES AND POLICIES FOR THEIR ADMINISTRATION THAT WILL IMPACT CITIES FOR YEARS TO COME.**

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That's why NLC launched the nonpartisan Cities Lead 2016 campaign last fall - to show the presidential candidates that by supporting city priorities and standing with city leaders, we can strengthen the nation's economy, build and maintain our infrastructure and keep our residents safe.

With the final weeks of the 2016 election season upon us, we need your help to shape the future of America and make sure that city issues remain a top priority during this election and into the next administration. This *PIE Playbook* is a guide to support you in your work as an advocate for the three issue areas that are important to cities - public safety, infrastructure and the economy. The resources that follow will provide you with the tools necessary to ensure that city priorities are at the forefront of the 2016 presidential election.



# #CITIESLEAD2016 ON THE ISSUES

**CITIES ARE THE FOUNDATION FOR THE NATION'S SUCCESS. THEY ARE WHERE AMERICA COMES TOGETHER TO LIVE AND TO WORK, TO DO BUSINESS, TO PLAY, AND TO CELEBRATE BOTH OUR DIVERSITY AND OUR COMMON VALUES AND BELIEFS.**

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With the outsized impact this year's presidential election will have on the future of our nation's cities, it is imperative for the candidates to understand the issues that matter most to officials at the local level — the leaders who have an on-the-ground view of the opportunities and challenges facing our nation's citizens.

In this section, you will learn about NLC's priority issues for the 2016 election. Each fact sheet may be handed out at events and meetings to inform the candidates. The information in these documents can also be used when personalizing letters to and tweeting at the candidates or for your personal use to stay up-to-date on NLC's issues.

For more information on the 2016 State of the Cities report, click [here](#), and for more on NLC's Cities Lead 2016 campaign, click [here](#).





# CITIES LEAD 2016 PRIORITY: PUBLIC SAFETY

Public safety is crucial to building strong, safe communities and creating an economy that works for all residents. Cities and towns [annually spend](#) more than \$64 billion on law enforcement operations alone. A majority of these funds go to employing more than 600,000 law enforcement professionals on a full-time basis.

Taken together, investments by cities and the federal government have had a clear and measurable impact in making America's streets safer and our communities stronger. The partnership among local, state and federal governments has produced significant reductions not only in overall crime rates, but particularly in the rates of violent crime and property crime. Recent FBI statistics indicate that the national rate of violent crime today is roughly half of what it was in 1993, and it is continuing to decline.

While cities have made tremendous progress through adoption of community policing strategies for positive, proactive engagement with the public, there is much more to be done. Although crime is down nationally, in many cities across the country, crime continues to be a significant barrier to individual and family safety, quality of life, and

social cohesion, particularly in racially diverse and disadvantaged neighborhoods.

A key to improving public safety and quality of life and ensuring stability for local economies is building trust between police and the public. With recent events across the nation showing the need for stronger police-community relations, government must work together at all levels to bolster community-oriented policing programs in cities. This will require a challenging mix of research, policy reform and political capital. In partnership with the federal government, cities are committed to evaluating police performance and taking all necessary steps to make our cities safer for all residents.

As recent events have demonstrated, good relations between police and the communities they serve are vital to a healthy city. Local leaders have played an essential role in bringing together police chiefs, frontline officers, civic leaders, stakeholders, nonprofits and associations to help develop effective policy to build trust between communities and law enforcement.

# To strengthen city efforts to improve public safety, we ask the next administration to:

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1

Expand technical assistance programs within the Department of Justice that could assist hundreds of cities and towns in developing evidenced-based community policing programs that build trust, improve community relations, and reduce racial tensions and crime rates;

2

Provide sufficient funding to support coordination and cooperation between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies; and

3

Take action to reduce the epidemic of gun violence that plagues our nation.

# STATE OF THE CITIES 2016: PUBLIC SAFETY

MAYORS SEE PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE ALLEVIATION OF CRIME AS ONE OF THE MOST CRITICAL COMPONENTS OF THEIR JOBS.

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## **An Increase in Murders**

Many mayors reported an uptick in crime within their cities, and this trend, noticeable across the country, was particularly alarming for homicide. Other research has shown, however, that even though the short-term homicide trend is pointed in the wrong direction, crime overall is still at the lowest point in decades nationally.

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, following the national trend, saw its overall crime rate decrease 10 percent from last year. However, the murder rate, “which had dropped significantly in 2013 and 2014 has followed the national trend and is back up again,” according to Mayor Mick Cornett. “Many of our homicides are the result of domestic violence. In the past two years, we have made significant changes in the way we deal with these situations. We are handling the calls differently. We are handling the investigations differently. We are learning more and more about which cases are likely to escalate,” said Cornett.

## **Police Body Cameras**

After a year of growing concern over police misconduct, cities are eager to embrace new technologies and techniques in public safety. Body cameras worn by police officers are one approach. Elizabeth, New Jersey, Mayor Chris Bollwage said that the devices are an

additional aid in “relaying, documenting and verifying information during interactions with law enforcement.” Bollwage is one of many mayors who announced plans to outfit all officers with body-worn cameras this year. While cities of all sizes are embracing the technology, many are developing policy and transparency procedures for use of the recordings.

## **Community Policing**

Community policing continues to be a popular topic within mayors’ addresses. “We’ve placed an emphasis on reestablishing community policing to improve dialogue between our community and wpolice officers,” said Buffalo, New York, Mayor Byron Brown. “We hold monthly meetings at each district police station, as well regular meetings with the Concerned Clergy, and Block Club leaders.” In San Diego, California, Mayor Kevin Faulconer said that “now more officers work hand-in-hand with residents” to keep neighborhoods safe. To do so, San Diego is continuing its efforts to hire police officers from the local community “to ensure the force reflects the people it serves.”



# 70%

of state of the city  
speeches included  
significant coverage of  
public safety issues.



Nothing is more fundamental  
than the safety of our  
neighborhoods. Nothing is  
more important than secure  
streets for our children and  
families to walk on.”

//MAYOR ERIC GARCETTI  
LOS ANGELES, CA

# CITIES LEAD 2016 PRIORITY: INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure investment is essential to driving economic growth at all levels. Improvements in transportation, water and broadband draw new businesses and jobs to cities and their regions, while creating a better climate for current businesses to expand and add workers.

U.S. government policy plays a formative role in supporting the infrastructure that cultivates successful cities. History shows how forward-thinking leadership on infrastructure at the federal level can pave the way for a strong economy. The Federal Highway Act of 1956 connected America's cities and towns and supported the growth and success of our regional and national economies. The Clean Water Act of 1972 and the Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 restored America's waterways and ensured the availability of clean water — making America's cities more livable and more attractive for business.

But today, it appears we have forgotten about the essential role of infrastructure investment in supporting quality of life and robust economic growth. Critical infrastructure across the nation is in a state of neglect and disrepair. 32 percent of America's major roads are rated as being in poor or mediocre condition, and that number is only expected to grow as we continue to underinvest by nearly half of what is needed to keep our roads in a state of good repair. Likewise, much of our water infrastructure was built in the post-World War II period and is in need of critical updates - an estimated 240,000 water main breaks happen each year in our country.

Furthermore, we must reexamine how federal infrastructure dollars are supporting 21<sup>st</sup> century economic trends. Since 1992, [roughly 80 percent](#) of all federal transportation funding has been reserved for the highway system, at the expense of alternative modes. In 2014, rush-hour commuters spent an estimated [6.9 billion hours](#) in traffic, up from 6.4 billion in 2010, at significant cost to the nation. In addition, at a time in our economic history where access to information is paramount to opportunity and prosperity, our nation's broadband system is failing many communities across the country. Around [15 percent of U.S. households](#)—or approximately 47 million Americans do not have Internet in their homes.

Adding to these problems is the impact of extreme weather events. Heat waves, droughts, heavy downpours, floods, and hurricanes are straining existing infrastructure and introducing new challenges.

The investments our federal leaders make to strengthen and modernize our nation's infrastructure will set the foundation for the next century of economic progress. To preserve our economic leadership in the world, the next president must make a priority addressing the woeful state of U.S. infrastructure and make the investments needed to support continued — and accelerated — growth in cities and throughout the country.

# To help modernize our nation's infrastructure, we ask the next administration to:

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-  Act as a champion for tax-exempt municipal bonds, the primary financing mechanism for state and local infrastructure projects. Any policy to alter the tax-exempt status of these bonds will cost local governments billions of dollars and prevent many projects from going forward;
-  Support adequate and reliable long-term funding for infrastructure reflecting local needs and priorities;
-  Support a vibrant web of connected transportation options — from transit and air to railways, roads, and waterways — as a means to reduce congestion, protect the environment, and stimulate economic development; and
-  Encourage and promote deployment of broadband networks in a competitive and technologically neutral manner, while preserving local authority to take action to ensure that residents have access to high-speed Internet and other communications services.

# STATE OF THE CITIES 2016: INFRASTRUCTURE

FROM BIKE PATHS TO SEWER SYSTEMS, INFRASTRUCTURE IS A DIVERSE TOPIC THAT RECEIVED A HIGH LEVEL OF ATTENTION IN THIS YEAR'S SPEECHES. DESPITE THE NEED TO ADDRESS FAILING SYSTEMS, CITY LEADERS ARE FACED WITH CONSTRAINED BUDGETS AND LIMITED FUNDING TOOLS.

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## Learning from Flint

The crisis in Flint, Michigan, where high levels of lead were discovered in the city's drinking water, demonstrated the effect that decisions can have on the lives of the most vulnerable residents. Lead in water can cause serious and irrevocable health effects, especially in children. In Flint, the decision to change the source of the city's water caused lead contaminants to leach from aging pipes.

Many cities have lead service lines that were installed largely before the 1930s. Oneonta, New York, is one such city, but through careful monitoring and vigilant maintenance, "the residents of Oneonta are very fortunate to have safe drinking water," said Mayor Gary Herzig. However, residents in other cities are not as fortunate. Almost 2,000 water systems in all 50 states have shown excessive levels of lead contamination over the past four years.

Cities are taking steps to minimize the chance of crisis in their own communities. Bloomington, Indiana, Mayor John Hamilton announced in his address that immediate improvements to his city's water system are already under way. In Toledo, Ohio, Mayor Paula Hicks-Hudson called "safe drinking

water as well as source water protection" hallmarks of a 21st-century city. And in Rock Island, Illinois, the city's 100-year-old water treatment plant will soon be replaced.

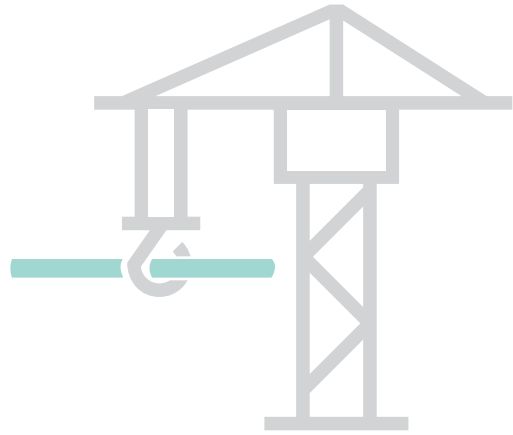
## Safe Roads and Trails

Linking another element of infrastructure to public health, mayors also stressed the importance of active and safe transportation to the vitality of their cities. Trail systems, like the one in Fayetteville, Arkansas, have been installed in multiple cities to provide connections for pedestrians and bicyclists as well as to promote storm drainage. New York is committed to achieving Vision Zero of no road fatalities or serious injuries. "Our Vision Zero Action Plan made 2015 the safest year on New York City roads for EVERYONE—pedestrians, cyclists AND motorists—since 1910," said Mayor Bill De Blasio. Seattle, Washington, decreased road fatalities by 25 percent, just one year after launching Vision Zero. Using data to its advantage, the city saw traffic deaths drop to "an all-time low," said Mayor Edward Murray.



# 48%

of state of the city  
speeches included  
significant coverage of  
infrastructure issues.



“Growing equitably  
and sustainably means  
getting transportation  
right.”

//MAYOR ED MURRAY  
SEATTLE, WA

# CITIES LEAD 2016 PRIORITY: THE ECONOMY

Cities are the engine of our nation's economy. From roads and transit to parks and libraries, to law enforcement and emergency services, cities create the conditions that drive new business, spur innovation, and attract talent and investment.

Six years after the Great Recession, the nation's economy has turned a corner in many respects. According to NLC's [2015 survey of local economic conditions](#), the economy is improving in nearly all cities, with 28 percent of cities reporting vast improvement, and 65 percent reporting at least slight improvement.

While job growth, increasing residential property values, and improved retail sector health stabilize local economies, these rising tides have failed to lift all boats. The state of our economy today is a tale of two cities. We see an economy that continues to outpace the rest of the world in innovation, but also one that is weighed down by slow productivity growth, suppressed wages and stubborn unemployment.

The recovery of the housing market in many cities is a double-edged sword. Rising home prices are helping to replenish local tax bases, but at the same time exacerbating the affordable housing crisis. According to the NLC 2015 survey, the median income of residents has increased in 53 percent of cities, but demand for survival services, such as food banks and homeless shelters, also has risen.

Cities work best when the economy works for everyone. A critical task facing the next president will be resolving these disparities. To start, all levels of government must work together to cultivate a skilled workforce to meet 21<sup>st</sup> century employer needs. The economic competitiveness and long-term success of our cities are directly tied to the quality and skills of the workforce.

The federal government also has a vital role to play in supporting the entrepreneurs and small businesses that make our local economies centers of innovation and economic reinvention. Entrepreneurs and small businesses not only create well-paying jobs, they deliver vital goods and services, generate sales tax revenue, and contribute to the unique character and livability of city neighborhoods.

Local leaders are in a unique position to support solutions to our nation's complex economic challenges. Cities stand ready to work with the next president to do what cities do best: create environments that support workers, grow businesses, and strengthen local, state and national economies.

## To help cities strengthen the economy, we ask the next administration to:

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- 1** Increase federal funding for workforce development and training programs that provide basic skills training and opportunities to upgrade skills to adjust to changing job market demands;
- 2** Leverage federal resources to support universal pre-K, afterschool programs and other initiatives that ensure that all children and youth have an opportunity to graduate from high school prepared for post-secondary education or employment; and
- 3** Support federal economic development tools such as New Markets Tax Credits and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which allow cities to drive investment in struggling neighborhoods, attract and retain businesses, and grow jobs.

# STATE OF THE CITIES 2016: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS ONCE AGAIN THE MOST DISCUSSED TOPIC IN MAYORS' ADDRESSES.

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## **Job Growth**

Having almost fully emerged from the Great Recession, mayors touted the many gains their cities have made in business and job growth. "Today, we're at a record level of jobs in our parish," said Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Mayor-President Melvin "Kip" Holden. "I could tell you about the more than 7,000 jobs created, or the \$327 million in new payroll or the \$1.1 billion in capital expenditures," he said before listing the names of major companies that chose to expand operations in his city. In Boston, Massachusetts, Mayor Marty Walsh welcomed General Electric to its new global headquarters in the city: "GE is not only a historic innovator, returning to the city where Thomas Edison got his start. It's not only another step forward for Boston on the world stage. It's a magnet for talent and investment that we'll direct toward our shared goals: in opportunity, in community, in education."

## **Manufacturing and the Maker Movement**

Other cities looked to unleash the potential of manufacturing and the maker movement, a growing group ranging from hobbyists and tinkerers to independent inventors and designers. "Small, independent businesses from craft brewers to design firms, bakeries, and salons are popping up all along our streets and in our squares," said Mayor Joseph

Curtatone of Somerville, Massachusetts. "So just like our thriving maker community, we're working to handcraft our future." Looking to grow their local maker movements, cities have hosted Maker Faires, opened co-working spaces, and made linkages between makers, the technology sector and local manufacturers.

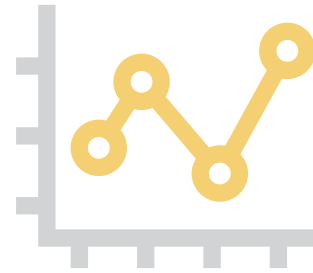
## **Making It Easier to Start a Business**

More and more cities are making it easier for entrepreneurs to apply for the permits and licenses needed to start or grow a business. "We will be expanding our online offerings for business—where now, for the first time ever, business licenses can be acquired through our city's website, and soon, the entire building permit process will be available in a single, seamless online system," said Mayor John Tecklenburg of Charleston, South Carolina. Similarly, Mayor Andrew Ginther spoke of how Columbus, Ohio, established a "small business concierge, to help entrepreneurs navigate city government" as well as "the Small Business Builder, an online roadmap for each stage of starting or expanding a business."



# 75%

of state of the city speeches included significant coverage of economic development issues.



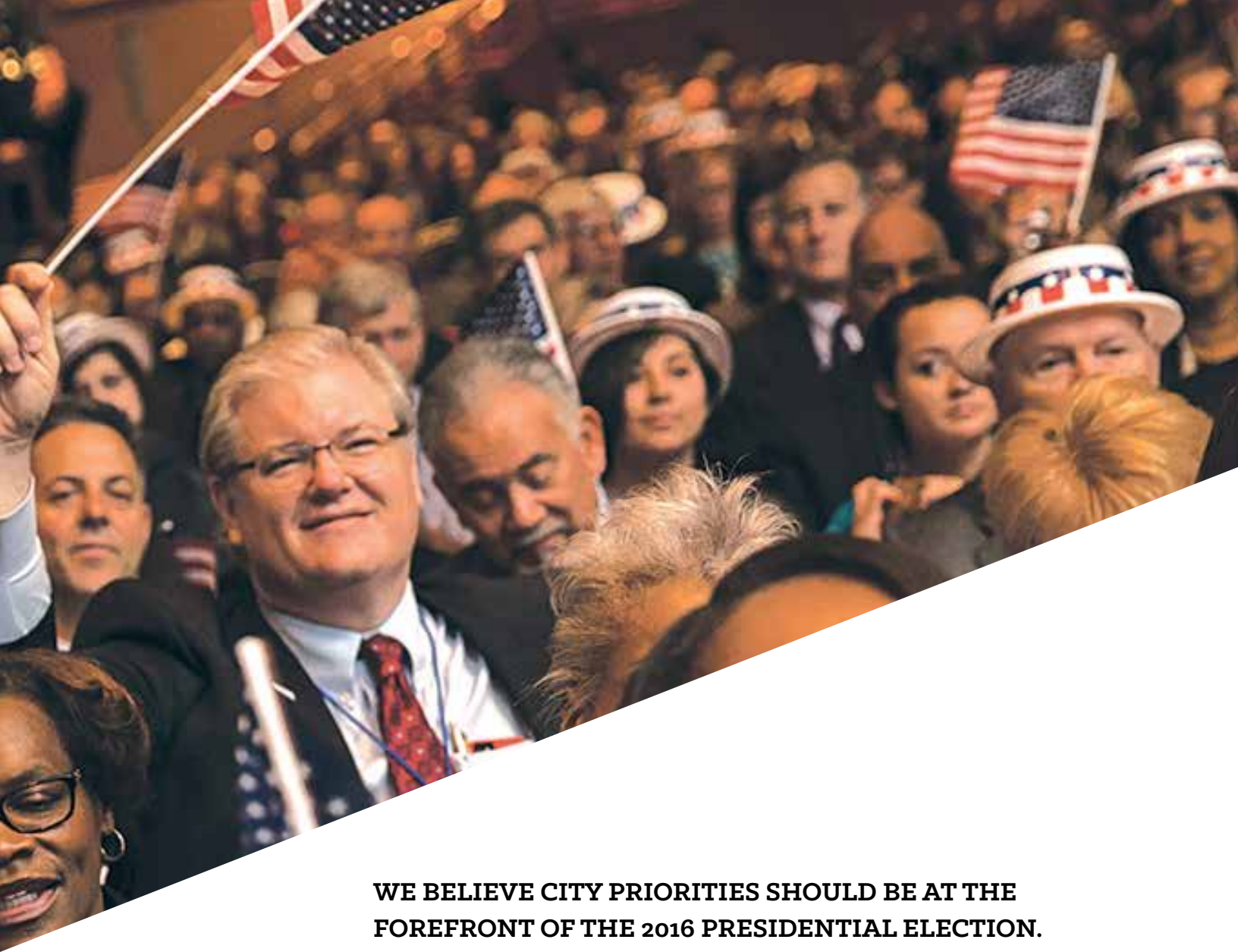
**“Today, we are not just talking about where our kids have moved for work, we are talking about our kids coming back.”**

//MAYOR BYRON BROWN  
BUFFALO, NY

**TAKE ACTION TO  
#STANDWITHCITIES**







**WE BELIEVE CITY PRIORITIES SHOULD BE AT THE  
FOREFRONT OF THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION.  
THAT'S WHY NLC NEEDS CITY LEADERS TO ENGAGE  
DIRECTLY WITH THE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES.**

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NLC and city officials have worked closely with the current and previous administrations to make a difference for cities and the people who live in them. We want to continue to do so by making sure the presidential candidates know that city issues are America's issues.

In this section, you'll find resources to easily engage in election advocacy activity. By sending letters and tweeting at the candidates, you can ensure that city priorities - public safety, infrastructure and the economy - are at the forefront of the 2016 election.

For more information on completing additional advocacy actions, click [here to visit NLC University's Federal Advocacy Workspace](#) or contact Ashley Smith at 202-626-3094 or [asmith@nlc.org](mailto:asmith@nlc.org).

# CITIES LEAD 2016 AGENDA SIGN-ON

**JOIN NLC'S CITIES LEAD 2016 EFFORT TO MAKE SURE THAT CITY ISSUES ARE A TOP PRIORITY FOR THE 2016 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES. REVIEW OUR PLATFORM BELOW THEN CLICK [HERE TO SIGN YOUR NAME](#) IN SUPPORT OF CITIES EVERYWHERE!**

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On behalf of the 19,000 cities, towns and villages represented by the National League of Cities, we urge the 2016 presidential candidates to address the issues that are most important to our nation's cities and towns: the economy, infrastructure, and public safety.

The next president will govern an increasingly urban country. 80 percent of Americans already live in cities. The next president must understand the issues that impact U.S. cities in order to be a successful leader.

The National League of Cities, on behalf of the communities it represents, is pleased to be a resource to the 2016 presidential candidates and their campaigns.

## THE ECONOMY

Cities stand ready to work with the next president to do what cities do best: create environments that support workers and grow businesses. To help cities strengthen the economy, we ask the next president to:

1. Increase federal funding for workforce development to cultivate a skilled workforce that meets 21st century employer needs.
2. Support initiatives that ensure all young people have an opportunity to graduate from high school prepared for post-secondary education or employment.
3. Support federal economic development tools such as the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) that will help local governments attract and retain small businesses.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure investment is essential to economic growth. Improvements in transportation, water and broadband draw new businesses and jobs to cities and their regions, while creating a better climate for current businesses to expand and add workers. If America is to preserve its economic prominence, our federal leaders must modernize our nation's infrastructure. We call upon the next president to:



1. Support reliable long-term funding for infrastructure that reflects local needs.
2. Support a vibrant web of connected transportation options—from transit and air to railways, roads, and waterways—as a means to reduce congestion, protect the environment, and stimulate economic development.
3. Preserve local authority to take action to ensure all residents have access to high speed Internet and other communications services.

## **PUBLIC SAFETY**

Good relations between police and the community they serve are vital to a thriving city. With recent events across the nation showing the need for stronger police-community relations, local elected leaders have played a crucial role in bringing together officers, stakeholders, and non-profits to help develop trust between residents and law enforcement. To strengthen these efforts, we ask that the next president:

1. Support local government authority to manage law enforcement and emergency management operations.
2. Establish national training standards and technical assistance to improve community policing.
3. Provide sufficient funding to support coordination and cooperation between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies.
4. Take action to reduce the epidemic of gun violence that plagues our nation.

# LETTERS TO THE NEXT PRESIDENT



With the general election in full swing, now is the time to ensure that the presidential candidates hear from local leaders about the economic, infrastructure and public safety challenges facing America's cities. In this section are sample letters you can personalize and send to the candidates on NLC's top issues. Simply click [here to send one \(or all three\) to the candidates today using our online advocacy tool](#) or download the letters below to send them on your own.

## SAMPLE LETTER TO NEXT PRESIDENT - PUBLIC SAFETY

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**SUBJECT:** Stand with Cities to Improve Public Safety in America

Dear [NAME],

On behalf of the 19,000 cities, towns and villages represented by the National League of Cities, I urge you to address the issues that are most important to our nation's cities and towns: the economy, infrastructure, and public safety.

Cities are where America comes together to live and work, to lead and succeed. A century ago, just 14 percent of Americans lived in cities. Today, 80 percent do. Protecting public safety is crucial to building strong, safe communities and creating an economy that works for all residents. Cities and towns annually spend more than \$64 billion on law enforcement operations alone. A majority of these funds go to employing more than 600,000 law enforcement professionals on a full-time basis. While cities have made tremendous progress through adoption of community policing strategies for positive, proactive engagement with the public, there is much more to be done.

A key to improving public safety and quality of life and ensuring stability for local economies is building trust between police and the public. Although crime is down nationally, in many cities across the country, crime continues to be a significant barrier to individual and family safety, quality of life, and social cohesion, particularly in racially diverse and disadvantaged neighborhoods. This will require a challenging mix of social investment, research, policy reform and political capital. In partnership with the federal government, as city leaders, we are committed to holding police accountable for their actions and taking all necessary steps to make our cities safer for all residents.

Good relations between local government officials, including police and the community they serve are vital to a thriving city. With recent events across the nation showing the need for stronger police-community relations, local elected leaders have played a critical role in bringing together officers, stakeholders, and non-profits to help develop trust between residents and law enforcement. To strengthen these efforts, we ask the next president to:

- 1) Expand technical assistance programs within the Department of Justice that could assist hundreds of cities and towns in developing evidenced-based community policing programs that build trust, improve community relations, and reduce racial tensions and crime rates.
- 2) Provide sufficient funding to support coordination and cooperation between federal, state and local law enforcement agencies; and
- 3) Take action to reduce the epidemic of gun violence that plagues our nation.

The next president has an opportunity to partner with local officials to turn things around for our cities and the nation, and to ensure that cities can continue leading the country to a brighter, more successful future for all Americans. The future of our nation depends on the actions we take today to support our cities. As you travel to our communities across America during this election, we urge you to discuss the urgent issues affecting our communities and their residents — with a focus on the economy, infrastructure and public safety. Working together, we can address the major public safety challenges facing cities and the nation.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE]

## SAMPLE LETTER TO NEXT PRESIDENT – INFRASTRUCTURE

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**SUBJECT:** Stand with Cities to Modernize America’s Infrastructure

Dear [NAME],

On behalf of the 19,000 cities, towns and villages represented by the National League of Cities, I urge you to address the issues that are most important to our nation’s cities and towns: the economy, infrastructure, and public safety.

Cities are where America comes together to live and work, to lead and succeed. A century ago, just 14 percent of Americans lived in cities. Today, 80 percent do. Infrastructure investment is essential to driving economic growth. Improvements in transportation, water and broadband draw new businesses and jobs to cities and their regions, while creating a better climate for current businesses to expand and add workers.

But today, it appears we have forgotten about the essential role of infrastructure investment in supporting quality of life and robust economic growth. Critical infrastructure across the nation is in a state of neglect and disrepair. 32 percent of America’s major roads are rated as being in poor or mediocre condition, and that number is only expected to grow as we continue to underinvest by nearly half of what is needed to keep our roads in a state of good repair. Likewise, much of our water infrastructure was built in the post-World War II period and is in need of critical updates - an estimated 240,000 water main breaks happen each year in our country.

The investments our federal leaders make to strengthen and modernize our nation’s infrastructure will set the foundation for the next century of economic progress. To preserve our economic leadership in the world, the next president must make addressing the woeful state of America’s infrastructure a priority and make the investments needed to support continued – and accelerated – growth in cities and throughout the country. To help modernize our nation’s infrastructure, we ask the next president to:

- 1) Act as a champion for tax-exempt municipal bonds, the primary financing mechanism for state and local infrastructure projects. Any policy to alter the tax-exempt status of these bonds will cost local governments billions of dollars and prevent many projects from going forward;
- 2) Support adequate and reliable long-term funding for infrastructure reflecting local needs and priorities;
- 3) Support a vibrant web of connected transportation options – from transit and air to railways, roads, and waterways – as a means to reduce congestion, protect the environment, and stimulate economic development; and
- 4) Encourage and promote deployment of broadband networks in a competitive and technologically neutral manner, while preserving local authority to take action to ensure that residents have access to high-speed Internet and other communications services.

The next president has an opportunity to partner with local officials to turn things around for our cities and the nation, and to ensure that cities can continue leading the country to a brighter, more successful future for all Americans. The future of our nation depends on the actions we take today to support our cities. As you travel to our communities across America during this election, we urge you to discuss the urgent issues affecting our communities and their residents – with a focus on the economy, infrastructure and public safety. Working together, we can address the major infrastructure challenges facing cities and the nation.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE]



## SAMPLE LETTER TO NEXT PRESIDENT – THE ECONOMY

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**SUBJECT:** Stand with Cities to Strengthen America's Economy

Dear [NAME],

On behalf of the 19,000 cities, towns and villages represented by the National League of Cities, I urge you to address the issues that are most important to our nation's cities and towns: the economy, infrastructure, and public safety.

Cities are where America comes together to live and work, to lead and succeed. A century ago, just 14 percent of Americans lived in cities. Today, 80 percent do. Cities are the engine of our nation's economy. From roads and transit to parks and libraries, to law enforcement and emergency services, cities create the conditions that drive new business, spur innovation, and attract talent and investment.

But our cities are facing new economic challenges every day. Areas of wealth and security stand just blocks away from neighborhoods entrenched in hardship and intergenerational poverty. Crumbling and inadequate infrastructure holds back our local, regional and national economies. Rising service costs, pension and healthcare obligations, along with decreased levels of state and federal aid, continue to constrain city fiscal conditions.

Cities work best when the economy works for everyone. A critical task facing the next president will be resolving these disparities and local leaders are in a unique position to support solutions to our nation's complex economic challenges. Cities stand ready to work with the next president to do what cities do best: create environments that support workers and grow businesses. To help cities strengthen the economy, we ask the next president to:

- 1) Increase federal funding for workforce development and training programs that provide basic skills training and opportunities to upgrade skills to adjust to changing job market demands;
- 2) Leverage federal resources to support universal pre-K, afterschool programs and other initiatives that ensure that all children and youth have an opportunity to graduate from high school prepared for post-secondary education or employment; and
- 3) Support federal economic development tools such as New Markets Tax Credits and the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program, which allow cities to drive investment in struggling neighborhoods, attract and retain businesses, and grow jobs.

The next president has an opportunity to partner with local officials to turn things around for our cities and the nation, and to ensure that cities can continue leading the country to a brighter, more successful future for all Americans. The future of our economy and our nation depends on the actions we take today to support our cities. As you travel to our communities across America during this election, we urge you to discuss the urgent issues affecting our communities and their residents — with a focus on the economy, infrastructure and public safety. Working together, we can address the major economic challenges facing cities and the nation.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[TITLE]

# TWEET AT THE NEXT PRESIDENT



**Social media is an easy and effective tool for communicating with the candidates and their followers. In this section are several sample tweets you can use to raise the profile of city issues with the candidates. Simply click the links or copy and paste each tweet into Twitter to send a message to the candidates. For more information on the candidates and to find their Twitter handles, click [here](#).**

## **Cities Lead Tweet**

The #nextpresident must #standwithcities to improve public safety, infrastructure & the economy: [bit.ly/2bd9TKj](http://bit.ly/2bd9TKj) #citieslead2016

## **Public Safety Tweet**

Improving public safety is crucial to building strong, safe cities. @HillaryClinton #standwithcities [bit.ly/2bd98B3](http://bit.ly/2bd98B3) #citieslead2016

Improving public safety is crucial to building strong, safe cities. @RealDonaldTrump #standwithcities [bit.ly/2bd98B3](http://bit.ly/2bd98B3) #citieslead2016

## **Infrastructure Tweet**

Investment in #infrastructure is essential to the growth of cities. @HillaryClinton #standwithcities [bit.ly/2bd6ICv](http://bit.ly/2bd6ICv) #citieslead2016

Investment in #infrastructure is essential to the growth of cities. @RealDonaldTrump #standwithcities [bit.ly/2bd6ICv](http://bit.ly/2bd6ICv) #citieslead2016

## **The Economy Tweet**

Cities are the engine of America's #economy. @HillaryClinton #standwithcities [bit.ly/2bd2KtE](http://bit.ly/2bd2KtE) #citieslead2016-

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