



# Southwest Conference of Mayors

## 2025 Legislative Program

The Southwest Conference of Mayors is a body of duly elected officials representing twenty-one communities in southwest suburban Cook County with a population in excess of 350,000. The Southwest Conference of Mayors was formed in an attempt to lower the cost of government, to improve services for our citizens and to promote managerial expertise for the individual and joint benefit of the Member Municipalities. The Southwest Conference of Mayors has the purpose to coordinate its membership's experience and expertise on problems of mutual concern.

The Southwest Conference of Mayors advocates for Preserving Local Authority and Protecting Local Government Revenue. The Members of the Southwest Conference of Mayors want to partner with their General Assembly Members to address issues that matter to our shared constituents while accomplishing the following:

- \* Restoration of the Local Government Distribution Fund to 10% so that critical and necessary services can be funded; public safety, pensions, infrastructure, and other critical obligations. The erosion to the LGDF has put a strain on municipal budgets and made it difficult to support critical services and to invest in our communities.
- \* Support the protection of Tier 2 Public Safety Pensions while opposing any enhancements to Tier 2 Pensions and/or the reinstatement of Tier 1 Pensions. "Safe Harbor" for municipal police and firefighters was fully addressed in 2019, and taxpayers are beginning to see the benefits of Tier 2 and the consolidation of downstate public safety pension funds. Public pensions, and the taxpayers that fund them, must be protected by preventing further Tier 2 pension benefit increases for police, fire, and IMRF.
- \* Protect all streams of local government revenue. The State must refrain from withholding, freezing, diverting, delaying or reducing any State-collected local revenue streams.
- \* The General Assembly must reject any legislation that will erode local decision-making authority. Municipal governments are in a unique position to best know the needs of their community.
- \* Oppose any legislation that created unfunded mandates for municipal governments. We urge the General Assembly to pass a constitutional amendment

requiring a super-majority vote to pass any legislation creating unfunded State mandates.

\* Recognize the ability of all municipalities to govern themselves, regardless of population. Removing the distinction between home rule and non-home rule would eliminate the barriers of non-home rule authority, giving all municipalities crucial local control.

\* Support preserving Tax Increment Finance Districts (TIFs) as an economic development tool for municipalities while not imposing any further restrictions on the use of TIF Districts.

\* Support programs and policies which provide funding for various transportation and infrastructure projects. The SCM urges the General Assembly to work with stakeholders, including Local Government Officials, in the decision making process to insure that all necessary and critical mass transits/transportation needs are met.

***The Southwest Conference of Mayors Supports the 2025 Legislative Priorities of:***

- \* The Illinois Municipal League
- \* The Metropolitan Mayors Caucus
- \* The Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning

***Southwest Conference of Mayors Member***

Village of Alsip	Village of Bedford Park	City of Blue Island
Village of Bridgeview	City of Burbank	Village of Chicago Ridge
Village of Crestwood	Village of Evergreen Park	City of Hickory Hills
City of Hometown	Village of Justice	Village of Lemont
Village of Merrionette Park	Village of Oak Lawn	Village of Orland Hills
Village of Orland Park	City of Palos Heights	City of Palos Hills
Village of Palos Park	Village of Willow Springs	Village of Worth

***Southwest Conference of Mayors Officers***

Gerald R. Bennett, President ~ Mayor, City of Palos Hills  
David R. Brady, Vice President ~ President, Village of Bedford Park  
Robert S. Straz, Vice President ~ Mayor, City of Palos Heights  
Victoria Smith, Executive Director

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