



Legislative UPDATE

April 30, 2021
Number 16

Texas Gains Two Congressional Seats

The U.S. Census Bureau released the first results of the 2020 Census on Monday. Texas gained the most residents of any state in the last decade, an increase of four million people since 2010 putting the state's population at 29.1 million. That increase will give Texas two additional congressional seats for a total of 38 seats. Texas will also gain two Electoral College seats making Texas the second largest state with its share of the Electoral College with 40 seats.

The League will continue to report as census data is announced.

Bills on the Move

Significant Committee Action

[H.B. 545 \(Thompson\)](#), relating to annexation. Voted from House Land and Resource Management.

[H.B. 768 \(Patterson\)](#), relating to open meetings. Voted from House County Affairs.

[H.B. 831 \(Thompson\)](#), relating to prohibiting chokeholds. Voted from House Homeland Security and Public Safety.

[H.B. 1877 \(Gates\)](#), relating to vacant residential buildings. TML provided [written testimony](#). Left pending in House Land and Resource Management.

[H.B. 1878 \(Gates\)](#), relating to vacant residential buildings. TML provided [written testimony](#). Left pending in House Land and Resource Management.

[H.B. 1929 \(Wilson\)](#), relating to ETJ development agreements. Reported from House Land and Resource Management.

[H.B. 2242 \(Patterson\)](#), relating to line of duty illness or injury leave. Voted from House State Affairs.

[H.B. 3015 \(Hernandez\)](#), relating to public information. TML provided [written testimony](#) [hyperlink to our letter]. Reported from House State Affairs.

[S.B. 374 \(Seliger\)](#), relating to annexation. Voted from House Land and Resource Management.

[S.B. 726 \(Schwertner\)](#), relating to eminent domain. Voted from House Land and Resource Management.

Significant Floor Action

[H.B. 5 \(Ashby/Nichols\)](#), relating to broadband. Passed the Senate.

[H.B. 541 \(Patterson\)](#), relating to disease presumption for COVID-19. Passed the House.

[H.B. 652 \(Paul\)](#), relating to an animal shelter. Passed the House.

[H.B. 829 \(Thompson\)](#), relating to progressive disciplinary matrix. Passed the House.

[H.B. 830 \(Thompson\)](#), relating to cite and release. Passed the House.

[H.B. 834 \(Thompson\)](#), relating to covert law enforcement activity. Passed the House.

[H.B. 1118 \(Capriglione/Paxton\)](#), relating to cybersecurity. Passed the Senate.

[H.B. 1938 \(Jetton\)](#), relating to body worn camera grants. Passed the House.

[H.B. 2429 \(Meyer/Bettencourt\)](#), relating to property tax notice. Passed the Senate.

[S.B. 69 \(Miles\)](#), relating to prohibiting chokeholds. Passed the Senate.

[S.B. 1428 \(Bettencourt\)](#), relating to property tax adoption following a disaster. Passed the Senate.

[S.B. 1438 \(Bettencourt\)](#), relating to tax rate calculation in disaster area. Passed the House.

[S.B. 1879 \(Bettencourt\)](#), relating to community advocacy. Passed the Senate.

EPA Announces Public Listening Sessions and Roundtables on the Lead and Copper Rule Revisions

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced upcoming public listening sessions and roundtables to ensure that communities and stakeholders have the opportunity to provide their perspectives to the agency on protections from lead in drinking water. A virtual public listening session will be held on **May 5, 2021**. EPA will then host community-focused virtual roundtables, starting in May of 2021. Additional details are available at www.epa.gov/safewater. Those unable to attend any of the events will be able to submit comments via the docket at: <http://www.regulations.gov>, Docket ID: EPA-HQ-OW-2021-0255 until June 30, 2021.

Stay Engaged During the Legislative Session: Grassroots Involvement Program

During this legislative session, Texas cities are facing many challenges and opportunities. TML will need to continue mobilizing our membership at key points in the remaining weeks. The Grassroots Involvement Program (GRIP) is one way to do so. Our GRIP survey focuses on a variety of items, including your areas of expertise and involvement with other professional organizations. Most importantly, the GRIP survey asks how well you know various state legislators and if you are willing to communicate with those legislators during the session.

If you have a relationship with your legislator(s) or want to be more involved during session, please take the time to complete the [GRIP survey](#). Past efforts have proven that participation is a highly effective tool.

We ask that you complete the survey as soon as possible.

City Officials Testify

When the legislature is in session, nothing compares to the effectiveness of city officials testifying at the Capitol. City officials who take the time to attend legislative committee meetings – whether virtually or by traveling to Austin – to speak out on important city issues should be applauded by us all. The League extends its thanks to all those who are vigilantly representing cities during this session. If we missed your testimony, let us know by an email to ford@tml.org, and we will recognize you in next week's edition.

The following officials testified in committee hearings held April 19 through April 23:

- Louis Rigby, Mayor, City of La Porte

- Alyssa Garza, Councilmember, City of San Marcos
- Darrek Farrell, Assistant City Manager, City of Victoria
- Thomas Gwosdz, City Attorney, City of Victoria
- George Craig, City of Houston Police Department
- John Packer, Mayor, City of Marble Falls
- David Rhodes, Councilmember, City of Marble Falls
- Chris Caso, City Attorney, City of Dallas
- Francisco Gomez, Sergeant, Houston Police Department
- Sally Bakko, Director of Policy and Government Relations, City of Galveston
- D.J. Harrell, Director of Development Services, City of Fort Worth
- Carl Smith, Chief of Police, City of Midlothian
- Martha Castex-Tatum, Vice Mayor Pro Tem, City of Houston
- Linn Goodman, Assistant Chief of Police, City of Cleburne
- David Fields, Chief Transportation Planner, City of Houston
- Gilbert Gomez, Mayor, City of Robstown
- Roland Barrera, Councilmember, City of Corpus Christi
- Charles Bujan, Mayor, City of Port Aransas
- Ronnie Parker, Mayor, City of Ingleside
- Cathy Skurow, Mayor, City of Portland
- Abbie Kamin, Councilmember, City of Houston
- Bill Kelly, Director of Government Relations, City of Houston
- Jeff Coyle, Assistant City Manager, City of San Antonio
- Andy Segovia, City Attorney, City of San Antonio
- Joel Baker, Fire Chief, City of Austin
- Sam Greif, Fire Chief, City of Plano
- Charles Hood, Fire Chief, City of San Antonio
- Robert Rocha, Fire Chief, City of Corpus Christi
- Craig Andres, Deputy Mayor Pro Tem, Town of Prosper
- Harlan Jefferson, Town Manager, Town of Prosper
- Richard Beverlin, City Manager, City of Leander

COVID-19 Update (No. 184)

After more than a year in which we've sent [183 email updates](#) and [amassed hundreds of pages of archives](#), the reduced volume of pandemic-related information no longer necessitates that the League send individual email updates.

In the future, all pandemic-related information, including information about the American Rescue Plan's city-related provisions, will be shown here – in the [Legislative Update Newsletter](#).

The following is this week's pandemic-related information:

- **Texas Rent Relief Update:** Changes were made to the Texas Rent Relief Program (TRRP), effective April 21, 2021. The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs published [a breakdown of the differences between the prior rules and the current rules](#). Of interest to cities is a change in the eligibility for tenants living in public housing. Previously, tenants receiving housing assistance were ineligible to receive benefits under the TRRP, but as of now, this is no longer a barrier to participation.
- **Reminder to Prepare Now to Receive Your American Rescue Plan Funds:** The National League of Cities has prepared an [allocations estimator](#) showing how much each city could receive. In addition, NLC staff has prepared a [Q&A web page](#) with the information they have obtained thus far. The following are basic steps cities should begin to take in anticipation of the funds.

The money should start being distributed soon, and cities must take certain steps to be eligible. Last week, the U.S. Treasury Department [posted online](#) the steps that metropolitan cities and non-entitlement cities units must take to receive their grants from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA). The following is taken directly from the Treasury site:

LARGE CITIES:

As soon as possible, *metropolitan cities* (generally those in an MSA with a population of 50,000 or more) should take the steps below.

Ensure the entity has a valid DUNS number. A DUNS number is a unique nine-character number used to identify an organization and is issued by Dun & Bradstreet. The federal government uses the DUNS number to track how federal money is allocated. A DUNS number is required prior to registering with the SAM database, which is outlined below. Registering for a DUNS number is free of charge. If an entity does not have a valid DUNS number, please visit <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/> or call 1-866-705-5711 to begin the registration process.

Ensure the entity has an active SAM registration. SAM is the official government-wide database to register with in order to do business with the U.S. government. All Federal financial assistance recipients must register on SAM.gov and renew their SAM registration annually to maintain an active status to be eligible to receive Federal financial assistance. There is no charge to register or maintain your entity SAM registration.

If an entity does not have an active SAM registration, please visit, [SAM.gov](#) to begin the entity registration or renewal process. Please note that SAM registration can take up to three weeks; delay in registering in SAM could impact timely payment of funds. [Click here for a quick overview for SAM registration](#)

Gather the entity's payment information, including:

- Entity Identification Number (EIN), name, and contact information
- Name and title of an authorized representative of the entity

- Financial institution information (e.g., routing and account number, financial institution name and contact information)

SMALLER CITIES:

Eligible *non-entitlement cities* (generally those under 50,000 population) will receive a distribution of funds from their respective state government. "Non-entitlement units of local government" are defined in 42 U.S.C. 5302(a)(5) that are not metropolitan cities.

For these Non-entitlement units of local government, Treasury will allocate and pay funds to state governments, and the state will distribute funds to non-entitlement units of local government in proportion to population. Non-entitlement units must have a valid DUNS number to meet reporting requirements under the program. If an entity does not have a valid DUNS number, please visit <https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/> or call 1-866-705-5711 to begin the registration process.”

Treasury has stated that program guidance for Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund will be released in the coming weeks.

Reminder: TML Coronavirus materials are archived by date [here](#) and by subject [here](#).

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