



Frequently Asked Questions: CGMC Basics

What is the CGMC?

We are a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization representing more than 100 cities outside of the Twin Cities metropolitan area. We advocate for the unique needs of Greater Minnesota cities on issues such as Local Government Aid, economic development, environment, transportation, and more. CGMC is led by a board of directors made up of mayors, city councilors and city staff members from across Greater Minnesota.

How & when was CGMC established?

Our origins stem from the early 1970s, when several Greater Minnesota mayors began to express concerns that their communities were not receiving adequate attention at the legislature. They decided Greater Minnesota cities needed their own representation at the Capitol. CGMC started with just 13 cities and was led by enthusiastic city officials who hired lobbyists, met regularly with legislators, promoted their ideas in the media, and developed a strong presence around the Capitol, all while continuing to welcome additional members into the fold.

How does CGMC decide which issues to work on?

Our legislative advocacy focuses on five main areas: LGA & property taxes, economic development, environment, transportation, and annexation & land use. Within these areas, priorities and positions are selected based on input gleaned from our members through subcommittee meetings and informal discussions. Our official legislative priorities and positions are adopted by CGMC's full membership at our Fall Conference in November.

Does CGMC provide any non-legislative services?

In addition to our legislative advocacy, we have a public labor and employment program that provides our members with data and information on topics ranging from negotiations with unions to disciplining employees and other workplace situations. Our labor team conducts seminars and webinars and has been a vital resource during the COVID-19 pandemic as our member cities navigate the new realities for their employees and workplaces. CGMC member cities are also entitled to reduced fees on legal services related to labor and employment issues.

How does CGMC calculate membership dues?

For most cities, dues are calculated based on a \$1,500 base fee plus an amount per capita (which is tiered so that larger cities pay more per capita than smaller cities). A different calculation is used for cities with populations greater than 35,000.

We have a four-year phase-in fee schedule for new members or returning cities that have not been members in the last five years. For those cities, dues are phased in starting at 25% of the total in the first year and then stepping up to 50%, 75%, and finally 100% over the next three years. This phase-in schedule allows new members to see the work of the CGMC and participate in our programs for just a small initial investment.

How does CGMC communicate with its members?

We keep in touch with members in several ways. The most consistent is through the CGMC in Brief, our weekly e-newsletter that provides updates on activities at the legislature, emerging issues, grant opportunities, and upcoming events. We also offer opportunities to delve more deeply into specific topics through webinars featuring CGMC staff or outside guests and experts.

In addition, CGMC staff members visit as many of our member cities between legislative sessions as possible. These visits can take many forms: Zoom meetings, face-to-face with the mayor and staff, or a presentation to the whole council.

Does CGMC host any events?

We host several events each year including our Summer Conference, Fall Conference, Legislative Action Day (our annual "lobby day" at the Capitol in St. Paul), and seminars on labor & employment issues. In addition to our in-person events, we often conduct webinars to provide in-depth information on specific issues that may impact your city.

My city has a specific bonding project or need for a local bill. Can CGMC help us?

We do not lobby or take positions on legislation that is specific to individual cities. However, our expert staff is always happy to offer advice and perspective to our members on the legislature and the legislative process.



Frequently Asked Questions: What sets CGMC apart

Does it really matter if Greater Minnesota has its own lobbyists?

Years of experience have shown that if CGMC doesn't speak up on certain issues, no one will — and surely no one who is specifically looking out for Greater Minnesota. The cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul have several lobbyists working for them at the Capitol, as do communities across the metro area through the Metro Cities organization and Met Council. Greater Minnesota deserves the same strong team of advocates looking out for your communities. CGMC provides that team.

Is CGMC just another partisan organization?

No! We are a nonpartisan organization and the city officials involved in CGMC cover every corner of the ideological spectrum. We have strong positive relationships and work closely with members of both parties to advance the needs of Greater Minnesota — and we aren't afraid to criticize either party when their actions warrant it.

How is CGMC different from the League of Minnesota Cities?

While the League of Minnesota Cities (LMC) covers issues that impact *all* cities across the state, CGMC focuses specifically on the unique needs and interests of cities in Greater Minnesota.

The work of CGMC and LMC is often complementary, but our distinct focus means we advocate for rural communities in ways LMC does not. By concentrating on needs and issues from a Greater Minnesota perspective, we strive to ensure that Greater Minnesota receives its fair share of state resources such as Local Government Aid, bonding dollars, economic development programs, etc.

My city hires a contract lobbyist to work on our issues. Why do we need to join CGMC?

Many cities hire a contract lobbyist or employ a staff member tasked with advancing specific bills at the legislature. They are great for bringing attention to a city-specific project, but no single contract lobbyist for an individual city is able to influence statewide policy on the "big issues" like LGA or transportation funding. When it comes to these types of major issues, a well-established association of like-minded advocates who can wield their collective power is far more effective.

It seems like CGMC spends a lot of time on local government aid (LGA), but my city does not receive LGA. Why should we be a member?

CGMC is most known for our advocacy on LGA, but we work on many other issues that are important to cities across Greater Minnesota. Child care, housing, broadband, transportation, environmental regulations, and annexation are just a few of the other critical issues that we work on.

In addition, we provide a discount on CGMC membership for cities that do not receive LGA. If your city's dues work out to be more than the LGA you receive, you are only charged for half of what your dues would otherwise be.

Won't CGMC just do the same work whether or not our city is a member?

There are certainly many cities who are not members of the CGMC but who still reap the benefits of our work. However, the cities who join CGMC understand that accomplishing favorable outcomes for Greater Minnesota requires cities to work together and put up a united front. CGMC cannot achieve success for all Greater Minnesota cities without a large group of member cities who support our shared goals and priorities.