



# leading together

2020

**cities  
agenda**

## An Agenda for the 2020 Presidential Election from America's Local Leaders

We are America's local elected leaders. We are the voice of America's cities, towns and villages, representing more than 200 million people. We are Republicans, Democrats and Independents. We may disagree on some issues, but we are united in the belief that our nation is strongest when all levels of government work together to protect and advance the priorities of America's communities and their residents. We are committed to **Leading Together**.

We know what Americans want from their elected leaders because we are the level of government closest to the people. We talk with our constituents every day—in the grocery store, in our places of worship, at school and community events. We understand what keeps Americans up at night and what kind of future they want for their families.

Our **Leading Together Cities Agenda** for the 2020 presidential election reflects this understanding of Americans' top priorities and concerns. This is America's agenda for a strong, safe and fair nation.

We call on the presidential candidates to endorse this Cities Agenda. We look forward to working with the President to deliver common-sense solutions for growing the economy, promoting public safety, and investing in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century infrastructure that will support all of America to thrive.

*2020 Presidential Election Task Force  
National League of Cities*

NATIONAL  
LEAGUE  
OF CITIES

## SHARED VALUES ...

As local leaders, we know that governing effectively is not just about *what* we do; it is also about *how* we get it done. We want to work with the President to bring a spirit of partnership to American politics and governance. We urge the President to join us in making a commitment to the following principles for our work together:

**RESPECT.** America's local leaders ask that the President respect the authority of local government to act in the best interests of our communities—by eliminating unfunded mandates, preemptions, and other restrictions on local decision making, and by providing resources directly to local governments.

**PARTNERSHIP.** Local leaders are committed to working together across parties and ideologies to solve problems. We ask that the President join us in lifting up America's political and policy discourse, looking for consensus, and forging bipartisan solutions.

**INCLUSION.** As our communities grow more diverse every year, America's local leaders want to partner with the President to build a nation and an economy that work for everyone. That means advancing policies that treat all people fairly and that create conditions where everyone can find opportunities to thrive and achieve their American dream.

**ACCOUNTABILITY.** America's local leaders understand that we are accountable for addressing the challenges and opportunities confronting our communities and their residents. We ask that the President join us in delivering on the promises we have made to our constituents and working diligently for positive results for America's communities.

## ... AND A SHARED COMMITMENT

America's communities —rural and urban, small and large— are facing challenges and opportunities across a wide range of issues. We recommend that the President adopt the following four priorities in the first 100 days of the new administration.

## Building Sustainable Infrastructure

Much of our nation's infrastructure is in need of repair, improvement and modernization to meet the demands of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. By investing strategically, we can ensure that America's infrastructure will support a stronger economy and withstand extreme weather events. To rebuild and reimagine our infrastructure, we ask the President to:

- ➔ Partner with local governments to rebuild and fully fund the nation's transportation network, better connect our regions, and innovate with technology and sustainable solutions.
- ➔ Provide grants, tools and resources to support local efforts to strengthen infrastructure and make communities safer and more resilient in the face of extreme weather events.
- ➔ Make the necessary investments to ensure that reliable, affordable broadband service is available to all Americans, including those in small and rural communities, while eliminating hurdles to local innovation.

## Creating A Skilled Workforce

Investing in the American workforce is critical to protecting and expanding our nation's economic success and ensuring that all people have opportunities to thrive. Because of the diversity of local economies, the federal government needs to empower local workforce solutions, streamline federal funding, and drive new resources to proven approaches in our communities. To advance workforce readiness in the face of changing economic forces and technology, we ask the President to:

- ➔ Boost investment in and awareness of apprenticeship programs that provide a pathway to successful careers, including industry and sector partnerships and pre-apprenticeship programs for workers with barriers to employment.
- ➔ Expand Pell grants and other financial aid programs to cover needed workforce skills training, such as short-term programs leading to certificates.
- ➔ Create new pathways to successful careers for unemployed and underemployed Americans through expanded investments in skills training and wraparound supports, such as childcare and transportation.

## Ending Housing Instability And Homelessness

Housing costs continue to climb in diverse communities across the country, leaving millions of individuals and families without enough money for food, transportation and other basic needs. The growing imbalance of housing supply and demand is putting affordable housing and homeownership out of reach for too many, while undermining economic success at all levels. This crisis is overwhelming cities and service providers working at the intersection of mental health, substance use

disorder and homelessness. Effective local responses require multi-sector partnerships and a strong federal partner. To promote comprehensive housing solutions, we ask the President to:

- ➔ Ensure sufficient federal funding streams are in place, partnerships are enabled and encouraged, and federal funds are appropriated directly to the local level for mental health, drug treatment and other emergency services.
- ➔ Prevent homelessness by providing wraparound services, emergency assistance and crisis interventions for at-risk individuals and families before they face a crisis.
- ➔ Promote housing affordability by advancing new policies to stabilize and stem the loss of public and affordable housing, while authorizing new funding for pilot programs that advance housing for all.

## Reducing Gun Violence

As local elected officials, we are charged with keeping our communities safe. Every day, 100 Americans die because of gun violence, and hundreds more are shot and injured. It's time for the nation's elected leaders to work together at all levels to address this crisis by advancing common-sense solutions to protect our communities and our children while ensuring that law-abiding residents maintain their Second Amendment rights. To reduce gun violence and promote public safety, we ask the President to:

- ➔ Convene a national commission on gun violence (including elected officials from all levels of government, victims' family members, survivors, gun advocates, law enforcement, and others) to offer recommendations.
- ➔ Advance legislation requiring fully federally funded and completed background checks for all gun sales and transfers, consistent with state and local laws.
- ➔ Enact federal legislation that would allow judges to issue extreme risk protection orders to reduce firearm-related suicides, murder-suicides, and domestic violence.
- ➔ Provide sufficient funding to the Centers for Disease Control to conduct comprehensive research to identify the underlying causes that lead to gun violence and mass shootings in communities.

By **Leading Together**, elected leaders at all levels of government can advance positive solutions and build a strong, safe and fair America. During the 2020 election cycle, the National League of Cities is pleased to serve as a resource for those vying to be the next leader of our nation, and for those who want to better communicate about the needs of America's communities and their residents.

Learn more at: [www.nlc.org/citiesagenda](http://www.nlc.org/citiesagenda)