

## About the league

The Virginia Municipal League is a statewide, nonprofit, nonpartisan association of city, town and county governments established in 1905 to improve and assist local governments through legislative advocacy, research, education and other services. The membership includes 38 cities, 170 towns and eight counties. VML is governed by a Board of Directors made up of local government officials. League members elect the Board of Directors at the annual conference each October.



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[WWW.VML.ORG](http://WWW.VML.ORG)

# Civility. Respect. Solutions.



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The Virginia Municipal League and its Board of Directors support restoring civility in government as a top priority. Leadership on this issue is something we take very seriously.

Our nation works best when its citizens work together, whatever their differences of opinion. For this to happen, citizens must treat each other with patience, tolerance and respect.

As destructive as incivility can be in everyday life, it is particularly harmful in municipal meetings and offices. Local government is about solving practical problems, and anything that interferes with effective, respectful communication makes the vital work of our local government members nearly impossible.

VML is here to help our local leaders be the example of how to govern best and to emphasize the basics of effective local governing, such as:

- **Running effective meetings.** VML's Handbook for Virginia Mayors & Council Members is a valuable resource for conducting effective public meetings.
- **Communicating thoughtfully.** Being open, honest and transparent – making sure everyone has access to the same universe of facts – is essential for people from different backgrounds and with different viewpoints to work together toward real solutions.
- **Building relationships.** Cultivating trusting relationships with others involved in an issue takes time, but the effort is worth it, and will pay off in the future.

There is much more to consider, and going forward, the league will do everything it can to help our members most effectively serve their communities despite the current crisis in civility.



Michelle Gowdy  
Executive Director  
Virginia Municipal League

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## Adopt the Civility Pledge

The [City/Town/County of Home Locality] pledges to practice and promote civility within the governing body.

The elected officials of the [City/Town/County of Home Locality] enact this civility pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of the community.

This pledge ensures all communication – both spoken and written – to be open, honest and transparent as this is vital for cultivating trust and relationships.

This pledge ensures mutual respect to achieve municipal goals, recognizing that patience, tolerance and civility are imperative to success.

This pledge creates opportunities for finding common ground and engaging in civil discussion to seek solutions through active listening and thoughtful participation.



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