



September 19th, 2019

Important Dates & Information

Today is the Deadline to Register for "What's New in Municipal Law" Seminar

The Division of Local Services legal staff will offer its annual "What's New in Municipal Law" seminar for local officials on Thursday, October 3, 2019 at the Log Cabin Banquet & Meeting House in Holyoke and Thursday, October 10, 2019 at The Lantana in Randolph.

The general session in the morning will review new legislation and recent court decisions pertaining to local government. The afternoon session will consist of three concurrent workshops that will discuss current and recurring issues of interest related to municipal finance law.

Please click the following for the [agenda](#) and the [registration form](#). Registrations must be received by September 19, 2019. Pre-

Community Compact IT Grant Program Now Open

Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito



I sincerely hope that each and everyone of you enjoyed your summer and had the opportunity to visit the many beautiful parts of the Commonwealth. From my selectwoman days in Shrewsbury, I know that the end of summer meant the beginning of Special Town Meetings, adjusting budgets and setting tax rates. Best of luck during this upcoming busy time!

A reminder that the Community Compact IT Grant Program opens on September 16th and closes on October 16th. This is a competitive grant program focused on driving innovation and transformation at the local level via investments in technology. Using the transformative powers of IT, we can drive innovation, make government more efficient, save taxpayer money, and make it easier for residents to interact and transact with their local government. Nearly 190 municipalities have received funds from the IT Grant program since its inception in FY16.

Grants of up to \$200,000 will support the implementation of innovative IT projects by funding related one-time capital needs such as technology infrastructure, upgrades and/or purchases of equipment or software. Incidental or one-time costs related to the capital purchase such as planning, design, installation, implementation and initial training are eligible. Cities and towns that were awarded an IT Grant Program grant in FY19 will not be eligible in FY20. Eligible communities can logon to the application [here](#).

Also, I would like to remind you about the conference we will once again be hosting in collaboration with the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA). Please join us Tuesday, October 8th at the College of the Holy Cross in Worcester for an event titled on "21st Century Municipalities – Challenges & Opportunities". State and local officials will join together to share ideas and attend workshops focusing on housing, cybersecurity, economic development, climate

registration is required.

If you have any questions about these seminars, please contact DLS Training Coordinator Jennifer McAllister at 617-626-3838 or dlsregistration@dor.state.ma.us.

Sewer Rate Relief Fund - FY2020

The Division of Local Services has released Bulletin 2019-4: Sewer Rate Relief Fund - FY2020. It can be found by [clicking here](#).

The Sewer Rate Relief Fund operates under the provisions of Chapter 29 Section 2Z of the General Laws. The Fund was created in 1993 to mitigate escalating costs of sewer service in the Commonwealth. Awards were based on "eligible debt service" and were calculated at up to 20% of debt service. For FY2020, \$1.1 million has been appropriated.

Please complete this year's application by using the required form that is being provided. It should then be emailed to Gerry Cole of the Division of Local Services at coleg@dor.state.ma.us. Applications must be submitted by Friday, October 11, 2019.

resiliency, age friendly communities and other subjects. You can register [here](#). We hope you can attend!

Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program Updates, Information Sessions, and New Funding Round

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs

Please join the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) on Thursday, September 19, 2019 from 2-3pm via webinar (registration and details [here](#)) or on Wednesday, September 25, 2019 from 1:30-2:30pm at 100 Cambridge Street, Conference Room A, Boston, MA (registration and details [here](#)) to learn more about the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) program and the next round of MVP Planning Grants and Action Grants.

Request for Responses (RFRs) for each grant type are expected to be released by the end of September 2019 via COMMBUYS. Action Grant applications will be due early-to-mid November 2019 and Planning Grant applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through mid-January 2020.

The MVP team is expanding! Over the last couple months a program manager (Kara Runsten; kara.runsten@mass.gov) has been hired, and the team is in the process of hiring six regional coordinators. These regional coordinators will serve as the main point of contact for municipalities in their region on all things MVP, provide technical assistance to planning and action grant communities, and create shared learning opportunities.

Three regional coordinators are already on board and are eager to assist all communities (no matter the region) in relation to the next funding round. Individuals can contact the coordinators directly with any questions.

Southeast MVP Regional Coordinator: Courtney Rocha, courtney.rocha@mass.gov, 617-877-3072
Northeast MVP Regional Coordinator: Michelle Rowden, michelle.rowden@mass.gov, 978-242-1358
Greater Boston MVP Regional Coordinator: Carolyn Meklenburg, carolyn.meklenburg@mass.gov, 617-626-7825

Agency-wide Modernization Underway at GIC

Group Insurance Commission (GIC)

The Group Insurance Commission (GIC) is a quasi-independent state agency responsible for providing health insurance and ancillary benefits to more 430,000 state and municipal employees and their dependents.

With changes throughout health insurance industry occurring rapidly, the GIC is taking steps to modernize operations to better meet the needs of its current and future members. Partnering with nationally recognized consulting firm Accenture, the GIC has been in the midst of broad-based strategic planning process and business process redesign aimed at identifying ways the agency can transform its service delivery model, improve its ability to use data analytics to support strategic and operational decision-making and better leverage new technologies to support core processes.

The evolution of the GIC is being seen already through the gradual reduction of paper-based communications, and increasingly, employing digital communication channels to inform members about their health and other insurance benefits. A most recent example is the creation of new digital assets like the “Turning 65” online video (available on YouTube and www.mass.gov) that is able to more succinctly explain to benefit coordinators and members how to smoothly transition to Medicare. GIC also recently produced its first digitized Annual Report for FY2017 and FY2018.

GIC Executive Director Dr. Roberta Herman has been meeting with labor and municipal leaders in recent months outlining these efforts. “As the Commonwealth’s largest purchaser of health insurance and as an influencer in the health care market, we must continuously evolve to better serve our members and the Commonwealth’s taxpayers now and in the years to come,” said Dr. Herman.

Accenture recently provided an initial report to the GIC Commission outlining additional recommendations for the agency:

- Improve member responsiveness and case resolution by adopting a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system that can be shared by all employees;
- Leverage the latest technologies that will lead to upfront document imaging and submission, online enrollment and enhanced mobile access to insurance and benefits information;

Other DLS Links:

[Local Officials Directory](#)

[Municipal Databank](#)

[Information Guideline
Releases \(IGRs\)](#)

[Bulletins](#)

[Publications & Training Center](#)

[Tools and Financial
Calculators](#)

- Broaden the insurance product portfolio in future years and provide members clearer, more discernible insurance options.

As these enhancements are implemented, the 38 municipalities and 12 regional school districts/education collaboratives currently enrolled with the GIC will see the value of their membership increase substantially in the coming years. In fact, as part of their ongoing efforts to increase engagement across all GIC stakeholder groups, Dr. Herman and her senior leadership team are soliciting input from its municipal member communities about what they would like to see from the GIC in the future. Some of the ideas captured to date include opening up GIC ancillary benefit programs (dental/vision, flex spending) to cities and towns, reducing the 60 day waiting period for new hires and providing greater access to workforce health analytics.

Communities interested in learning more about the GIC are encouraged to contact Mike Berry, Director of Government Affairs, at Michael.C.Berry@mass.gov.

September Municipal Calendar

15	Assessors	Submit Property Sales Report (recommended date)
15	Accountant and Assessors	Jointly Submit CPA Surcharge Report This is the deadline to submit Form CP-1 (statement of the prior year's net CPA surcharge levy) to MDM in order to receive matching funds from the State Treasurer's distribution on November 15.
15	CPA Committee	Submit CPA Projects Report This is the deadline to enter new CPA projects and update existing ones in the MassGIS CPA projects database in order to receive matching funds from the State Treasurer's distribution on November 15.
30	Accountant and Treasurer	Submit Balance Sheet and other Documents for Free Cash Certification The Accountant and Treasurer coordinate to submit a balance sheet to BOA along with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Indebtedness • Treasurer's Year-end Cash Report • Cash Reconciliation Form

- Schedule of Outstanding Receivables

- 30 Accountant, Superintendent and School Committee **Jointly Submit End of Year Report to DESE**
DESE uses this report to determine the community's compliance with prior-year and current-year NSS requirements.
- 30 Accountant **Submit Snow & Ice Report**
- 30 State Treasurer **Notification of Monthly Local Aid Distributions**, see [IGR 17-17](#) for more cherry sheet payment information, monthly breakdown by program is available [here](#).

October Municipal Calendar

- 1 Collector **Mail Semiannual Tax Bills**
Communities using the regular semiannual billing system should mail actual tax bills or optional preliminary tax bills by this date.
- 1 Collector **Mail Preliminary Tax Bills for 2nd Quarter**
Collector mails these bills if the 2nd quarter bills were not included in the July mailings.
- 1 Taxpayer **Deadline to Pay the Semiannual Preliminary Tax Bill Without Interest**
Per [M.G.L. c. 59, § 57C](#), this deadline applies in semiannual communities using the annual preliminary tax billing system unless the bills were mailed after August 1. If mailed after August 1, the payment is due either November 1 or 30 days after the bills were mailed, whichever is later.
- 1 Taxpayer **Deadline for Applying to Have Land Classified as Agricultural/ Horticultural Land or Recreational Land**
Under [M.G.L. c. 61A, §§ 6 and 8](#) and [c. 61B, §§ 3 and 5](#), this is the deadline to apply to the Assessors to have land valued, taxed, and classified as agricultural/horticultural or recreational land in the next fiscal year. Taxpayers who miss this deadline have until 30 days after the mailing of the actual tax bills to apply to the Assessors.
- 1 Taxpayer **Deadline for Submitting Forest Land Certification and Management Plan**
As set by [M.G.L. c. 61, § 2](#), this is the deadline to submit to the Assessors the State Forester's certification and approved management plan to have land classified as forest land for 10 years beginning in the next fiscal year.
- 15 Assessors and Accountant **Begin Working on the Tax Rate Recapitulation Sheet (the recap)**
Assessors in communities that issue quarterly or annual semiannual preliminary tax bills should begin gathering data for the following tax recap pages in order to

have enough time for the tax rate to be set and actual tax bills mailed by December 31.

- 15 Assessors **Submit New Growth, Amended Tax Base Levy Growth, and Final Valuations Reports to BLA (recommended date)**
- 31 Accountant **Deadline to Submit the CPA Fund Balance Report (Form CP-2)**
[See July 15.]
- 31 State Treasurer **Notification of Monthly Local Aid Distributions**, see [IGR 17-17](#) for more cherry sheet payment information, monthly breakdown by program is available [here](#).

To view the municipal calendar in its entirety, please [click here](#).

Editor: Dan Bertrand

Editorial Board: Sean Cronin, Donnette Benvenuto, Linda Bradley, Paul Corbett, Theo Kalivas, Ken Woodland and Tony Rassias

Contact *City & Town* with questions, comments and feedback by emailing us at cityandtown@dor.state.ma.us.

To unsubscribe to *City & Town* and all DLS alerts, email dls_alerts@dor.state.ma.us.