

2024 Legislative Initiatives

Project 2040

By the year 2040, 70 percent of America's population will live in just 15 states, and Indiana is not projected to be one of those states. Now is the time to change this trajectory and highlight why cities and towns are critical to retaining and attracting talent and growing Indiana's economy. Aim Project 2040 seeks to do that through communications, education and advocacy. Specifically, Aim will work with the Indiana General Assembly to:

- Support revenue diversification. Local units are too reliant on restricted revenue sources. Municipalities need additional revenue raising capabilities with the ability to modify them depending on current economic conditions and fewer restrictions on current revenue streams.
- Update outdated municipal finance laws and provide municipal fiscal officers with reasonable methods for administering the fiscal functions of city and town government.
- Explore opportunities for municipal officials and their public safety officers to collaborate with mental health experts and support more modern public safety practices, including mobile-integrated health programs.
- Promote policies that address Indiana's rising poverty levels.

These are important goals that will likely need to be addressed in multiple legislative sessions, but they will remain front of mind for Aim's legislative team. During the upcoming legislative sessions, Aim will focus on the following as it relates to Project 2040:

State and Local Taxes

- **Background:** The General Assembly is currently conducting a comprehensive review of the state and local tax structure through the State and Local Tax Review Task Force (SALTR). Local income taxes, property taxes, and all other local taxes (including Food and Beverage, Innkeepers, etc.) are under review. The task force is looking at the feasibility of cuts to residential property taxes, business personal property taxes, and income taxes (including LIT). State fiscal conditions are also being examined to determine how to replace any lost tax revenue.
- **Aim's Position:** Aim supports a comprehensive review of the state's tax structure. If any cuts are deemed appropriate on local income or property taxes, there needs to be permanent replacement funding guaranteed and backed by the state.

Mobile Integrated Health Funding

- **Background:** Improving public health outcomes is a major priority for the state of Indiana and local units of government. To support this goal, some municipalities have established Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) programs after enabling legislation was passed by the General Assembly in 2019 and 2020. MIH creates flexibility for patients by allowing first responders to provide care in a patient's home or in a more convenient mobile location. Many of these programs focus on providing health screenings, vaccinations, and follow-up visits.

Communities who have implemented these programs have seen positive health outcomes, but long-term funding is needed. A first step in addressing this is allowing proactive visits to be reimbursed by Medicaid. Currently, the cost of these services can only be reimbursed by Medicaid if the call is initiated by a 911 call.

- **Proposed Solution(s):** During the 2024 legislative session, Aim will support legislation that allows Medicaid reimbursements for all mobile integrated health calls instead of just the services initiated by a 911 call. However, since the 2024 session is not a budget session, this conversation and conversations about long-term funding will likely need to continue during the 2025 legislative session when the state of Indiana adopts its biennial budget.

Municipally Owned Utilities

- **Background:** Ensuring municipally owned utilities have the flexibility and resources to address critical infrastructure needs is an important priority for Aim and its members. Aim will continue to work with the General Assembly to help municipalities address issues stemming from increased costs tied to inflation and the costs associated with aging infrastructure.
- **Proposed Solution(s):** This will likely need to be a long-term conversation since any financial support from the state would need to be authorized in a budget-year. In addition, Aim will continue to work with the House and Senate Utilities committees on opportunities to encourage local units to have rates that are adequate to address the long-term needs of the utility.

2024 Operational Initiatives

Publication of Public Notices

- **Background:** Under current law, municipalities are required to publish public notices in the newspaper. This can be expensive for local units and papers cannot always deliver notices in a timely manner that can be easily accessed by constituents. Many local papers are shutting down and there is no relevant local paper in which to publish the notices.
- **Proposed Solution:** During the 2021 session, legislation was passed that provided political subdivisions some flexibility related to notices. When a political subdivision is required by statute to publish a notice two or more times, the political subdivision may now publish the second and subsequent notices on their official website after the first notice is published in the required newspaper(s). Aim will support legislation that continues to modernize public notice requirements by allowing all public notices to be published online.

Archiving and Streaming

- **Background:** Legislation was passed during the 2023 legislative session that requires the executive (as defined in IC 36-1-2-5), legislative body (as defined in IC 36-1-2-9), or fiscal body (IC 36-1-2-6) of a county, city, town or township and any governing body that conducts the governing body's regular meetings in the same meeting room as the executive, legislative or fiscal body to livestream and archive their meetings beginning July 1, 2025. Archives of the meeting must be kept for 90 days after the meeting and made available for public inspection and copying or downloading before they can be destroyed.

- **Proposed Solutions:** Aim will continue to work with members of the General Assembly leading up to the 2025 effective date. While the goal of local units is to provide transparency, there must be a balance that recognizes the additional resources that are needed to accomplish that goal. Potential solutions include:
 - Limit the law to larger communities who already have this technology available
 - Limit this requirement to only meetings of the governing body
 - Further delay requirement to provide more time for communities to prepare
 - Limit the archiving requirement to reduce cost
 - Clarifying the definition of technology failures to ensure that the actions taken at public meetings are not void if there are technology issues associated with the archiving and livestreaming of meetings

Mobile and Manufactured Homes

- **Background:** Language was added to HEA 1315 during the 2023 legislative session that limits the ability of cities and towns to regulate the construction or siting of mobile homes on private property including on lots that already contain other homes. Planning and zoning is an important function of local units of government and these decisions should be made by local elected officials based on the long-term planning for their communities.
- **Proposed Solution:** Remove the changes from HEA 1315 regarding mobile and manufactured homes.