

Introduction

As part of our annual advocacy process, the 2025-26 New York Association of Towns (NYAOT) Executive Committee, along with its Resolutions Committee, met in person to discuss the legislative goals and priorities of the association at the state and federal levels in its representation of all 933 towns in New York State, home to more than 9 million New Yorkers. Ultimately, the body adopted 14 resolutions to guide NYAOT staff in their advocacy activities and were voted upon by the delegation to our 2026 Annual Business Meeting Feb. 17, 2026 in New York. They are included here.

Promoting Good Government & Nurturing the State-Local Partnership

- Uphold and strengthen the principles of Home Rule, and accordingly oppose any state initiative that seeks to weaken or threaten New York's long-standing status as a Home Rule state. Furthermore, the New York Association of Towns (NYAOT) will oppose any state or federal initiative that would weaken or eliminate New York's long-standing tradition of home rule and local government authority.
- Support an increase to AIM appropriations funded by the state to account for the rate of inflation and increased costs borne by local governments and continue to fund the Temporary Municipal Assistance (TMA) Program.
- Call for and support the creation of a dedicated funding program for municipal water and sewer infrastructure using a fair and equitable formula (similar to CHIPS) to distribute funds annually to municipalities, known as SWAP, the Safe Water Action Program.
- Maintain, support, and increase funding for CHIPS, PAVE-NY, BridgeNY, Extreme Winter Recovery, Pave Our Potholes and other transportation funding in the 2023-2024 State Budget and to continue to provide stable and sustainable long-term funding for local infrastructure, as well as any additional funding that might address increased project costs and funding shortfalls caused by inflation and delays between project approval and award of funding and to support Complete Streets projects by expanding eligibility to reflect town needs.
- Support the creation of a statewide, centralized grant clearinghouse where all state agencies must post available grant opportunities intended for local governments to allow for a searchable, updated and transparent portal for all municipalities, regardless of population, staff, budget or other resources.
- Modernize statutory public notice requirements to allow official municipal .gov websites as a valid and effective method of providing public notice and support legislation authorizing towns not required to maintain a .gov website to satisfy public notice requirements through additional methods such as email alerts, social media, or digital news media publication where appropriate.
- Adopt legislation and regulatory changes reducing barriers to cooperative and more affordable health insurance such as: exempting municipal employers with less than 100 employees from required community rated plans; amending the required number of covered lives to create an Article 47 health care consortia; and/or allow the pooling of stop-loss coverage so that towns may join county self-insured plans.

Addressing Workforce Development

Last year, NYAOT had identified workforce development and related issues to be a source of major concern in the daily operations of towns. Through an association-wide survey, we determined that: more than two-thirds of respondents reported struggling in the area of workforce development and more than half reported needing between one and three months to fill an open position. Notably, 20 percent of respondents identified highway employees and CDL-required positions as most difficult to fill.

- Increase the salary cap (Retirement and Social Security Law § 212) for retired public officials returning to public service to \$65,000.

- Amend civil service rules to make the hiring process easier for public employees by allowing provisional appointees to automatically become permanent employees after nine months if no exam is available in that time period and by declaring that professions licensed by New York State should not be classified as competitive.

Ameliorating Revenue, Tax & Finance Issues

NYAOT has identified simple adjustments that can be made to the tax cap formula that would remedy the inequities in the tax cap and allow towns and other local governments to implement the cap in a less deleterious manner, as well as some other common-sense issues that would enable towns to generate additional revenue streams outside of real property tax.

- Adopt tax cap reforms to remedy inequities in the formula, including but not limited to, removing infrastructure project costs from the calculation, removing EMS costs from tax cap calculations and removing special improvement district costs from the tax cap calculation.
- Requests legislative action to ensure that governing bodies of affected tax jurisdictions have the ability to approve agreements that impact the tax jurisdiction's real property tax base or require that a community benefits agreement be negotiated with the town directly to make up the difference between what would have been collected in real property taxes and payments the town receives from a PILOT agreement.
- Enact legislation providing towns with more revenue sources, like having the option to impose local hotel or motel occupancy tax, sales taxes and gross receipts taxes.
- Update and increase the competitive bidding thresholds under General Municipal Law §103 to reflect current economic conditions and procurement realities.
- Adopt legislation requiring all public utilities, pipeline companies, fiber and cable providers, wireless carriers, and all reporting entities subject to special franchise valuation or telecommunications ceilings to provide complete inventory and installed-cost data directly to each affected local assessor at the same time such data is submitted to the state Department of Taxation & Finance, including but not limited to: asset descriptions and equipment type; installed cost and year of installation; pole, conduit and fiber counts; linear feet of overhead and underground plant; GIS/GPS location data; and lists of additions, retirements and fixed-asset register changes.

Conclusion

We invite connection and discussion on these and other issues affecting New York State towns and local government. Our staff is available to answer questions, facilitate solutions and work toward a better New York for all New Yorkers. To schedule a meeting, please contact us.

Continue the Conversation!

For more discussion on these topics and others important to our members, please find us on social media and subscribe to (or appear as a guest on) our podcast, Talk of the Towns, available on YouTube and Spotify.

