City and Town Managers Virtual Workshop
(Zoom Meeting)
December 8, 2026

Agenda

9:30 a.m. – 9:40 a.m. **Welcome and Opening Remarks**

9:40 a.m. – 10:40 a.m. **Preparing for 2027: Strengthening Legislative Relationships and Engagement**

Join the Aim team for a discussion on strategic legislative engagement ahead of the 2027 session. Learn how city and town managers can build relationships with newly elected legislators, navigate changes in legislative leadership and committees, and stay informed on key issues, including local income tax (LIT) changes and potential property tax legislation. This session will explore practical strategies for communicating municipal priorities, supporting local elected officials, and strengthening engagement throughout the legislative process.

10:40 a.m. – 10:45 a.m. **Break**

10:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m. **Safety, Efficiency, and Engagement: Leveraging Language Access to Achieve Result**

In this presentation, council members will learn proven strategies to improve communication with non-English-speaking residents, increase government efficiency through language access SOPs, and advance safety for all. Speaker Lucas Fonseca, whose research was recently cited in a national study and report for the U.S. President and Congress, will share municipal data, case studies, and cultural insights that shape effective communication across communities.

11:30 a.m. – 11:35 a.m. **Break**

11:35 a.m. – 12:10 p.m. **Building Meaningful Relationships with your Council**

This session will explore how town managers can build productive relationships with council members while maintaining professional boundaries, organizational integrity, and a commitment to the community. Panelists will discuss strategies for establishing trust, communicating clearly, understanding leadership styles, and setting shared expectations. The conversation will also address navigating disagreement, criticism, shifting priorities, political tension, and crises. Attendees will gain practical tools for managing conflict constructively and sustaining a healthy, effective council manager partnership during both successful and challenging times.

12:10 p.m. – 12:30 p.m. **Lunch**

12:30 p.m. – 1:15 p.m. **Public Safety Consolidation: Exploring Opportunities, Challenges, and Best Practices**

As municipalities face increasing financial pressures, staffing challenges, and growing demands for public safety services, consolidation may offer opportunities to improve efficiency,

reduce costs, and strengthen service delivery. This workshop will explore the considerations involved in consolidating police, fire, EMS, and other public safety operations, including shared services, interlocal agreements, and regional partnerships. Attendees will gain practical insights to help evaluate whether consolidation is a viable option for their communities and identify strategies for successful implementation.

1:15 p.m. – 1:20 p.m. **Break**

1:20 p.m. – 2:05 p.m. **Taking Local Control of Planning and Zoning**

Explore how city and town managers can help their communities gain greater control over local planning and zoning decisions. This session will cover Indiana's statutory requirements for establishing independent plan commissions and boards of zoning appeals, including the process for withdrawing from a joint Area Plan Commission (APC). Hear from two Indiana town managers who have navigated this process and learn about three approaches: full independence, shared staffing arrangements, and a phased transition. Attendees will gain practical insights to help determine the best approach for their communities.

2:05 p.m. – 2:10 p.m. **Break**

2:10 p.m. – 2:55 p.m. **Planning for What's Next: Succession Planning for City and Town Managers**

Effective succession planning is essential to maintaining strong leadership, organizational stability, and continuity of municipal operations. Join Nate Thorne for a practical discussion on how city and town managers can proactively prepare for leadership transitions, identify and develop future leaders, and preserve institutional knowledge. This session will explore strategies for building a leadership pipeline, mentoring staff, and preparing for both planned

and unexpected departures. Attendees will gain valuable insights and actionable steps to strengthen their teams and ensure a smooth transition when leadership changes occur.

2:55 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. **Break**

3:00 p.m. – 3:45 p.m. **Navigating Conflict and Managing Difficult Public Meetings**

Public meetings can quickly become challenging when emotions run high, disagreements escalate, and difficult issues take center stage. This workshop will provide city and town managers with practical strategies for anticipating potential conflicts, preparing for controversial topics, and proactively structuring meetings to minimize disruptions.

3:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m. **Final Questions and Closing Remarks**