



Legislative UPDATE

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NLC Releases *City Fiscal Conditions Report*

The National League of Cities (NLC) released its 30th annual [City Fiscal Conditions Report](#) this week. The report surveys U.S. cities to analyze revenues and expenditures of cities' general funds.

This year's version marks the highest percentage of cities able to meet their financial needs since the survey began, with 82 percent of city finance officers reporting that their cities are better able to meet financial needs in 2015 than in 2014. In addition, the ending balances of cities' general funds have reached pre-recession levels.

These two factors demonstrate modest improvement in financial stability. As cities face diminished aid from federal and state governments, they are becoming more self-reliant and more likely to set aside funds for emergencies or an economic downturn. Despite growth, *revenues* have not yet reached pre-recession levels and spending demands are increasing. For instance, infrastructure needs are still highly prevalent with 48 percent of cities reporting infrastructure costs negatively impacting their budget.

While fiscal conditions slowly improve, the report indicates city budgets are stabilizing. In Texas, cities are experiencing rapid growth and must retain broad local authority to make fiscal decisions that keep the "Texas Miracle" alive.

Body-Worn Cameras: Public Information Act Fees

Senate Bill 158, passed during the 84th legislative session, governs various facets of police body-worn cameras. The bill requires the attorney general to set a proposed fee to be charged to

members of the public who seek to obtain a copy of a recording from a body-worn camera. The fee amount “must be sufficient to cover the cost of reviewing and making the recording.”

As of September 1, 2015, when S.B. 158 went into effect, the attorney general’s office had not yet adopted a fee as required by the bill.

The League will continue to monitor any related rulemaking and will provide more detailed information as it becomes available. In the meantime, cities can call the attorney general’s “Cost Hotline” at 888-ORCOSTS with questions about how much to charge for producing footage.

Additional information about S.B. 158 is available at <http://www.tml.org/body-worn-cameras>.

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