



Special Session – COVID-19 Response

The Utah League of Cities and Towns appreciates the legislature’s efforts to tackle the many issues facing the state and local communities during the COVID-19 crisis. Our approximately 1,700 mayors, commissioners, and council members recognize that this global health and economic crisis requires state and local solutions. As the crisis has evolved, cities have repeatedly found innovative solutions and dedicated resources to serve their residents. ULCT looks forward to collaborating with legislative leaders through the year to develop the best outcomes for Utah’s families and businesses by leveraging state and local expertise, solutions, and ingenuity.

We kindly request that the legislature address the following issues in future special sessions. We also expect policy discussions and legislation on the federal funds designated for local recovery in the CARES Act and have addressed those funds in a separate letter.

The list indicates issues also requested by the Utah Association of Counties (UAC).

Top priorities

- GRAMA responses: expand the “extraordinary circumstances” described in §63G-2-204(6) to include a quarantine, closure of government office, or other circumstances that limit personnel access to equipment, records, or offices; and extend time limits under §63G-2-204(7) (UAC)
- Public funds: suspend deposit timing requirements in §10-6-141 and §51-4-2 (UAC)
- Land use signatures: relax “wet” signature requirements on plats and development agreements during pandemic
- Reemployment: modify reemployment restrictions on retired first responders and other skilled municipal personnel (UAC)
- Minutes: provide additional time for approving and posting meeting minutes (UAC)

Future Priorities

Administration:

- Notarization: clarify and permit remote notarization (UAC)
- Disaster response: address authority ambiguities in Title 53, Chapter 2a, Disaster Response and Recovery Act
- Governmental Immunity Act: amend §63G-7-401(3)(b)(ii) to remove requirement that an entity must accept claims by hand delivery and allow claims to be delivered by mail or electronically
- Solicitation: allow cities to modify or suspend door-to-door solicitation business licensing during pandemic

Meetings:

- Quorum: modify city and county council vacancy requirements in situations where a quorum cannot be convened to fill a vacancy
- Remote meetings: amend Title 52, Chapter 4, Open and Public Meetings Act to accommodate remote meetings and public comment in a pandemic (currently accommodated in executive order)

Housing:

- Residential evictions: adopt a temporary stay and rental assistance for evictions and foreclosures that are related to COVID-19

- Business evictions: stay or defer small businesses evictions related to COVID-19 30-60 days

Law enforcement:

- Criminal citations/BCI: address issues with signing criminal citations and fingerprint requirements to enter a criminal charge in BCI (UAC)
- Disease exposure: §78B-8-401 prescribes when a city may petition a court to compel a defendant to be tested if an EMS provider or police officer is exposed to a “disease.” COVID-19 is not identified in the definition of “disease” and the legislature should either amend the definition to include COVID-19 or the Dpt. of Labor should designate COVID-19 as an included disease as permitted in §78B-8-401(2).

State

- Assistance requests: ensure that applications with DWS and HHS (among other agencies) may be done remotely or by telephone, not just in person or online