

To strengthen
and promote
cities as centers
of opportunity,
leadership, and
governance.



**National League of
Cities**

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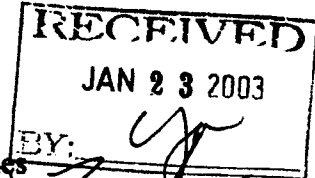
ATTACHMENT 1

January, 2003

To: Mayors and Managers of NLC Member Cities

From: Donald J. Borut, Executive Director

Subject: NLC Legal Defense Fund



At the NLC annual meeting in Salt Lake City last month, your board of directors approved the creation of a legal defense fund. This new fund will cover legal fees for carefully selected litigation on behalf of cities, towns, and villages where the court decision or regulatory ruling—either favorable or unfavorable—could have a significant impact on a large number of municipalities across the country. A committee of state league directors, municipal attorneys, and elected officials will oversee the fund's operations and select the cases on which NLC will intervene on behalf of all cities.

The impact of court decisions and federal administrative rules on local governments is growing rapidly. So, too, is the cost of litigating and filing comments on the many complex legal issues that affect municipalities. While NLC routinely includes funds in its annual operating budget for litigation, those funds have not proved to be sufficient to ensure adequate coverage on the wide range of national legal issues that affect America's cities and towns—issues such as the preemption of local authority, the imposition of unfunded mandates, and other fundamental home rule issues.

Accordingly, the NLC Board directed that the legal defense fund be funded in part through voluntary contributions from NLC members and provided an additional \$85,000 as seed money from NLC. The suggested contribution to the fund is five percent of your community's annual dues to NLC. The invoice for the next dues billing you receive from NLC will include a dues check-off box for your community to contribute to the legal defense fund. While a five percent contribution is suggested, any amount is welcome. All funds collected will accumulate in a separate interest-bearing NLC account, and unexpended funds will carry over from year to year.

Legal advocacy on behalf of cities and towns is an increasingly critical part of NLC's mission in Washington. I hope your community will be able to support this initiative. If you have any questions, please visit the NLC website at www.nlc.org or contact Jeff Fletcher of our staff at 202-626-3123 or fletcher@nlc.org.

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