

SMALL CITIES: BUILDING CONNECTIONS AND SHARING SOLUTIONS

League of California Cities

Small Cities Focus Session



SESSION GOALS



**SUPPORT ONE
ANOTHER**



**SHARE BEST
PRACTICES**



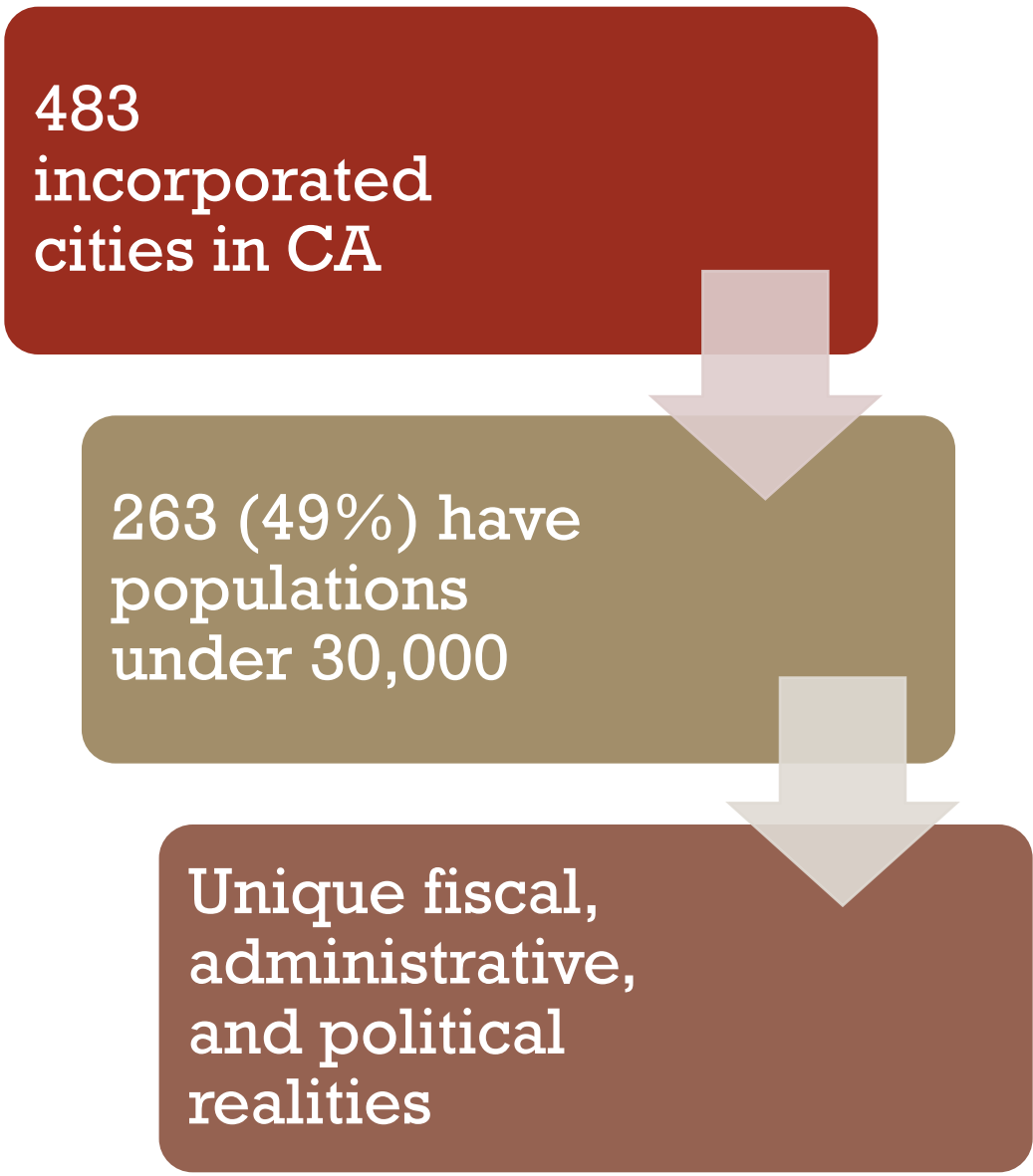
**HIGHLIGHT
ADVANTAGES &
CHALLENGES UNIQUE
TO SMALL CITIES**



**LEAVE WITH NEW
IDEAS AND
CONNECTIONS**



483
incorporated
cities in CA



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graph TD; A[483 incorporated cities in CA] --> B[263 (49%) have populations under 30,000]; B --> C[Unique fiscal, administrative, and political realities];
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The diagram consists of three vertically stacked rectangular boxes connected by downward-pointing arrows. The top box is dark red and contains the text '483 incorporated cities in CA'. A light red arrow points from the bottom of this box to the top of the middle box. The middle box is olive green and contains the text '263 (49%) have populations under 30,000'. A light olive arrow points from the bottom of this box to the top of the bottom box. The bottom box is a darker brown and contains the text 'Unique fiscal, administrative, and political realities'.

263 (49%) have
populations
under 30,000

Unique fiscal,
administrative,
and political
realities

CALIFORNIA'S SMALL CITIES LANDSCAPE





**UNIQUE
CHALLENGES**





Staff wearing multiple hats (e.g., city manager doubling as HR)



Lack of specialized staff (grant writers, legislative analysts)



Limited ability to respond quickly to new state mandates

LEAN STAFFING

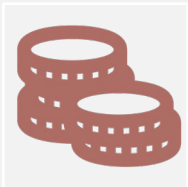




Fewer revenue
streams



Dependence on
state/federal grants



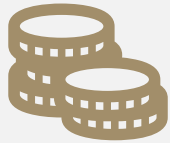
Ineligibility for
funding tied to
population thresholds

LIMITED FISCAL RESOURCES





Housing production
goals not scaled for
city size



Environmental
mandates without
funding



Policing reforms
requiring staff small
cities don't have

ONE-SIZE- FITS-ALL LEGISLATION





Outdated water
and sewer systems



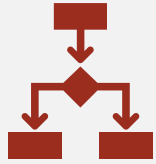
Limited public
works staff



Difficulty meeting
modern safety
standards

**AGING
INFRASTRUCTURE**





- Balancing growth with small-town feel



- Historic preservation vs. development pressures



- Tourism reliance in some small communities

COMMUNITY IDENTITY & CHARACTER





Limited data and
benchmarking tools



Less access to
lobbyists or regional
think tanks



Minimal participation
in statewide policy
design

ACCESS TO RESOURCES





**UNIQUE
OPPORTUNITIES**



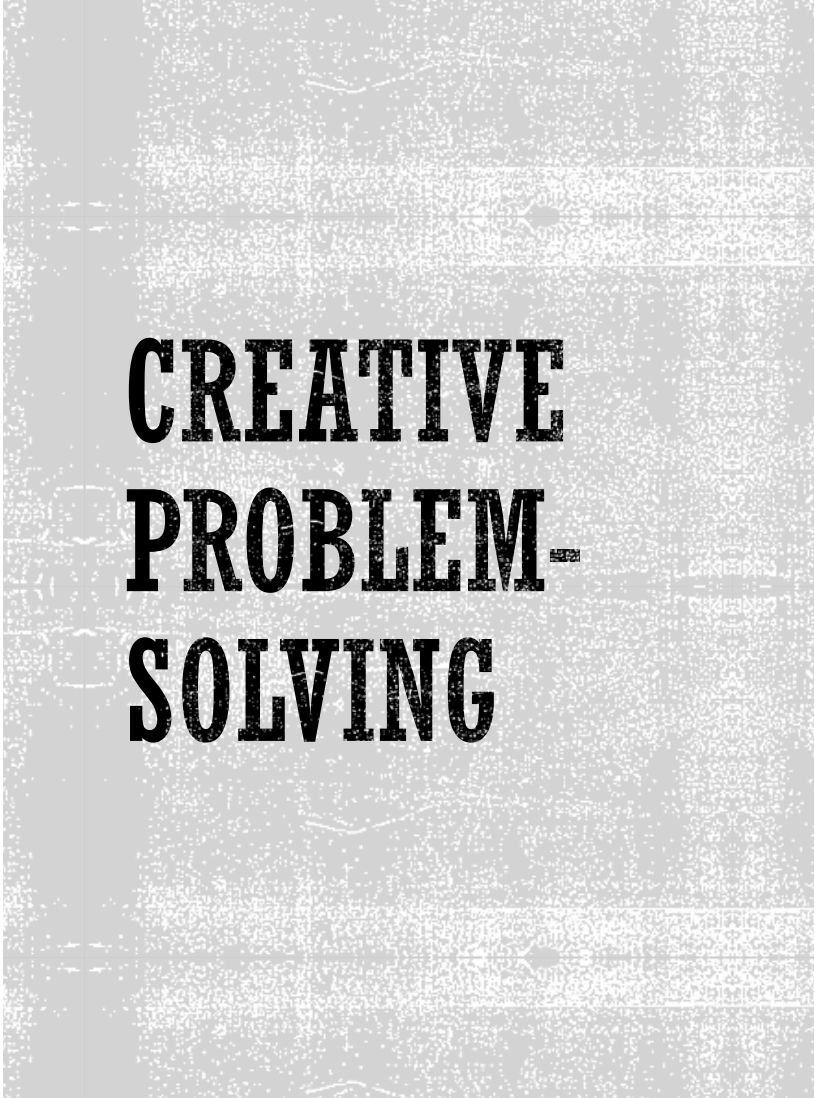


NIMBLE & INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE



CLOSE COMMUNITY TIES

**ABILITY TO
PILOT
PROGRAMS
QUICKLY**



CREATIVE PROBLEM- SOLVING



**Policy Impact: Ensure
scalable solutions**



**Fiscal Resources: Level
the funding field**



**Staffing: Share expertise
across cities**



**Peer Support: Build
collaborative spaces**

WHY A SMALL CITY MEMBER GROUP?





Strengthens representation
of nearly half the cities



Increases engagement from
underserved members



Reinforces equity across all
city sizes



Positions League as a
national leader

BENEFITS TO THE LEAGUE





**Membership: Cities
<30,000 population**



**Steering
Committee: Elected,
rotating
geographically**



**Activities: Quarterly
calls, listserv, annual
roundtable**

PROPOSED STRUCTURE





Prompt: What's your city's biggest challenge & one solution that has worked?



- Group discussion & sharing



- Capture themes for collective priorities

SMALL CITIES IN ACTION (INTERACTIVE)





Small cities are half
of California's
municipalities



They deserve
scalable policies
and equitable
representation



A Small City
Member Group can
provide that voice

**CLOSING: WHY
THIS
MATTERS**

