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Media Contact:
Sarah Werner, Engagement and Communications Manager
1144 Sherman St., Denver, CO 80203
(p) 303-831-6411 · (f) 303-860-8175
swerner@cml.org
www.cml.org

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

Survey of Colorado municipalities reveals resiliency in face of COVID-19 challenges

Jan. 19, 2021, Denver – Today, the Colorado Municipal League (CML) released the [2021 State of Our Cities & Towns Report](#), which examines the operational and fiscal impacts of COVID-19. The 2021 report, which is based on results of a survey conducted in the fall of 2020 of cities and towns statewide, is being released as an interactive online data story to provide a more visual narrative and encourage a deeper understanding of the municipal experience of the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings from the 173 municipalities that responded show that while the impacts of COVID-19 on operations, revenue, and local economies are as varied as the municipalities that responded, Colorado municipal officials' commitment to serving their communities is universal.

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has sickened over a quarter million Coloradans, forced the closure of schools and businesses, and killed thousands of residents, has also drastically limited the revenue available to cities and towns at a time when they are working to continue infrastructure investment, support local businesses, and keep the people in Colorado municipalities safe. The *2021 State of Our Cities and Towns Report* features stories of how the individual municipalities of Boulder, Englewood, Fruita, Lone Tree, and Rifle keep delivering for their residents despite the most challenging circumstances.

Key findings of the survey include:

Economic data:

- 51% of respondents report worse overall economic health and 46% report lower revenues in 2020 as compared to 2019. 16% report better overall economic health, and 27% report increased revenues.
- 41% of municipalities cut their general fund to balance their budget, including 7% who predict these cuts will be permanent.
- 71% of respondents report a negative fiscal impact to their utility due to postponing utility fees and shutoffs.
- 89% of respondents either have recovered or expect to fiscally recover within 24 months, 22% of large municipalities expect to take up to five years and 7% of small towns expect to never completely recover.

Municipal workforce impacts:

- 9% of responding municipalities furloughed full-time employees.
- 6% laid off full-time employees.
- 13% reduced hours of full-time employees.
- 34% have postponed filling vacancies for full-time positions, including 8% that have not filled 10 or more positions.
- 10% eliminated positions.
- 23% have frozen salaries.

Municipal response to community needs:

- 48% of municipalities offered direct financial assistance to businesses.
- 69% deferred payment of bills or fines.
- 16% expanded internet access or provided internet hot spots.
- 21% increased services to people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, including providing food, rent or mortgage support, hygiene stations, and hotel vouchers.

The full data story can be viewed [here](#). Complete survey results can be found [here](#).

CML is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization established in 1923 and represents the interests of 270 cities and towns. For more information on the Colorado Municipal League, please visit www.cml.org or call 303-831-6411.

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