• Information on Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River issues as well as grant opportunities, legislation, research, and demonstration project opportunities;

• Coalition of over 130 Great Lakes and St. Lawrence mayors and locally elected officials representing a unified voice for local government;

• Representation of local interests at key Great Lakes and St. Lawrence decision and policy making arenas like the Great Lakes Executive Committee, the Canada-Ontario Agreement Respecting the Great Lakes Basin Ecosystem and the St. Lawrence Plan;

• Connection with other municipalities in the region as well as other orders of government, stakeholders, researchers, and funders;

• Access to a best practices network on municipal restoration and protection efforts and much more;

• Recognition for the work local governments are doing to protect, restore and promote the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River;

• Participation in solving problems faced in the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin.

What does it mean to be a member of the Cities Initiative?

Membership signifies a commitment to working towards the protection, restoration, and promotion of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River region to ensure its health and vitality for generations to come. Mayors of the Cities Initiative recognize the need to integrate environmental, economic and social agendas within their communities to help sustain the Lakes and River to ensure the quality of life and economic well being of the citizens of the region.

Members of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative have access to a bi-national and multi-stakeholder network focused on advancing the interests of cities in the future of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. Members pass resolutions, select the Board of Directors, and help shape the policy direction of the organization. Participation in protection and restoration projects is an integral part of membership. Members have access to the latest best practices on topics such as water conservation, sustainable development, invasive species, and water and wastewater infrastructure. An Annual Members Meeting and Conference is held each year, hosted by a member city, as an opportunity for members to discuss Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River issues, shape the direction of the organization for the year and most importantly, network with one another.

Members of the Cities Initiative are also eligible to participate in programs developed by the Cities Initiative that address some of the most pressing issues occurring along the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. Cities Initiative programs for members include:

• Water Conservation Framework – promoting best practices to further advance the 19% reduction in water consumption achieved between 2007 and 2015.

• Green CITTS – promotes and expands the sustainable practices in which Great Lakes and St. Lawrence cities are engaged and provides for training, funding, research opportunities and demonstration projects for these activities.

• Climate Change Resiliency and Adaptation Service – Cities Initiative developing one-stop service to provide data, share best practices and help its members face the challenge of adaptation to climate change.

What do my cities’ dues cover?

Membership dues support the general operations of the organization, including staff, operating costs, and other expenses associated with the running of the organization. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a low overhead, high results organization with staff in Chicago, Montreal, and Toronto.
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Accomplishments

The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a major, positive presence in decision making and actions related to the greatest fresh water resource in the world. Since beginning operations in the summer of 2003, the organization has been a force for action and results to help protect, restore, and sustain the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

In its 12 years of existence, the Cities Initiative has:

- Forged a formidable coalition of over 130 mayors in municipalities with over 17 million residents, spanning two countries, two provinces and 8 states, speaking with one voice.
- Created a ‘brand’ for members of the Cities Initiative that is a symbol of political leadership and awareness of municipal stewardship to protect the resource.
- Earned increasing public profile for member mayors and their municipalities, gaining recognition among decision-makers for their local accomplishments in protecting the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence.
- Helped draw attention to the critical connection between environmental progress and economic prosperity through a joint study with the Brookings Institution on the costs and benefits of increased investment in the Great Lakes, as well as through leadership from member municipalities on integrating their environmental, economic and social agendas.
- Secured seats at the table and added the municipal voice to critical Great Lakes and St. Lawrence issues such as the control of ballast water and invasive species, declining water levels, shoreline erosion, public access to waterfronts, effective beach standards, infrastructure investment, and remediation of contaminated sites, among other issues.
- Held 12 successful and well-attended Annual Meeting and Conferences that attracted mayors, municipal staff and other decision-makers and stakeholders from across the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence basin and provided a strong media profile for the Cities Initiative and its members.

The importance of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative and the municipalities it represents has been recognized by most of the key decision making groups, including:

- Great Lakes Fishery Commission: Presidential appointment of a Cities Initiative representative as a commissioner and Vice Chair.
- International Joint Commission, Water Quality Board: Commission appointment of a municipal representative as U.S. Chair of the Board.
- Great Lakes Advisory Board: Cities Initiative representative serves as Chair of the Board that provides advice to USEPA and ten other Federal agencies on Great Lakes priorities, goals and policies.
- Great Lakes Executive Committee: The Cities Initiative represents local governments on this binational body charged with overseeing progress under the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement.
- Compact of Mayors: Active engagement in the Paris Climate Summit for Local Leaders that helped bring about international climate change agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative

Influence

In addition to this ongoing activity, the Cities Initiative has demonstrated its considerable influence on the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, either through its rapid response or collective strength, with the following key accomplishments:

- Climate Change Resiliency and Adaptation Service – The Cities Initiative developed a one-stop service to provide data, share best practices and help its members face the challenge of adaptation to climate change.
- Asian Carp — The Cities Initiative and Great Lakes Commission work collaboratively to prevent invasive species, including Asian Carp, from moving through the Chicago Area Waterway System between the Mississippi River basin and the Great Lakes and improve water quality, flood management and transportation.
- Green CIITTS – The Cities Initiative is working to promote and expand sustainable practices in which Great Lakes and St. Lawrence cities are engaged and provide training, funding, research opportunities and demonstration projects for these activities. Areas of focus have been stormwater management, sustainable municipal water management and climate adaptation and resiliency.
- Radioactive Waste – The Cities Initiative objected to the shipment of radioactive waste by Bruce Power of Ontario. The shipment has been cancelled. The Cities Initiative also objected to the deep geologic repository (DGR) for radioactive waste on the shores of Lake Huron.
- Beaches - The Cities Initiative advances beach management awareness and implementation of best practices.
- Microbeads - The Cities Initiative has encouraged state and federal governments to pass laws banning plastic microbeads from personal care products. The US Federal Government recently passed a nationwide ban, and Ontario and Quebec are pursuing bans.
- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative - Cities Initiative mayors were instrumental in advancing President Obama’s $2.0 billion commitment to fund Great Lakes restoration work. The Cities Initiative works to ensure this investment continues in the coming years with many member cities benefitting from grants.
- Memorandum of Cooperation for the Canada-Ontario Agreement – The Cities Initiative signed an agreement with the Ontario Ministries of Environment and Climate Change, Natural Resources, and Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs establishing a strategic partnership between Ontario municipalities and the Ontario Government to collaborate on Great Lakes decisions. The agreement was extended in 2012 and renewed in 2015.
- Local Investment in Protection and Restoration – In partnership with the Great Lakes Commission, the Cities Initiative conducted a survey that found that Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River local governments invest more than $15 billion annually in protection and restoration efforts, more than any other order of government.
- Water Conservation Framework – Cities Initiative mayors launched an effort to reduce water use in cities by 15% between 2000 and 2015. Members collectively reduced water consumption by 19%, saving over 123 billion gallons of water.
- British Petroleum, Whiting, Indiana Refinery – Cities Initiative mayors help force BP to back away from plans to increase pollution discharges to Lake Michigan.
- Coast Guard Live Fire Exercises – Cities Initiative mayors led a successful effort to stop US Coast Guard live fire exercises across the Lakes, which were adding large amounts of lead and other contaminants to the water.
- Presidential Executive Order on the Great Lakes – The Cities Initiative was instrumental in getting the President to sign an executive order in May 2004 to increase the priority of dealing with Great Lakes issues.
The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative is a coalition of U.S. and Canadian mayors and other locally elected officials working to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. The organization was founded in May 2003 by Mayor Richard M. Daley of Chicago, joined shortly thereafter by Toronto Mayor David Miller, the founding Canadian Chair. The Cities Initiative has 130 member cities demonstrating the leadership of local elected officials to enhance and sustain the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River.

**Importance of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence to Mayors**

Mayors in the basin have a direct interest and stake in the sustainability of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence. As the world’s largest surface freshwater resource and an international treasure, the system is essential to the continued vitality of the cities, townships, villages and counties along the shores and in the surrounding watershed. The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence support countless recreational, commercial, tourist and cultural activities for citizens and visitors; drive economic development and improve the economic value of shoreline communities; support critical aquatic and coastal ecosystems; provide fresh drinking water for millions of people; and support agricultural and industrial activities.

**Why a Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative?**

Cities are on the frontlines when it comes to the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, literally. Despite such a significant stake in this resource, mayors have not always had an active voice in the development and implementation of policies and programs. Through the Cities Initiative local governments are not only at the decision and policy making tables but are a catalyst for action and lead by example on protection and restoration efforts. The Cities Initiative also provides a network for cities to share best practices on protection and restoration efforts and more.

Mayors of the Cities Initiative believe in taking an integrated approach to the environmental, social, and economic agendas they carry out in their cities, towns, counties and regions, in order to advance the protection and restoration of the Lakes and River. The mayors are committed to working with other orders of government and stakeholders to improve and expand our infrastructure and carry out protection and restoration actions in a way that sustains our freshwater resource long into the future and ensures the quality of life and economic well being of the people of the region.
I would like to join with other mayors from the United States and Canada, all around the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence, to advance the protection and restoration of this outstanding resource. The quality of life and economic well being of our citizens and visitors are closely tied to maintaining the integrity of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence in the future.

Date (MM/DD/YYYY) City

Mayor Email address

Mayor Contact Information:

Address (no. and street) City, State/Province, Postal/Zip code

Phone No. (XXX-XXX-XXXX) Fax No. (XXX-XXX-XXXX) City website

Primary Staff Contact Information:

Name and title

Address (No. and street) City, State/Province, Postal/Zip code

Email address

Phone No. (XXX-XXX-XXXX) Fax No. (XXX-XXX-XXXX)

Population of City Annual Dues

- 0—1,000 $550
- 1,000—2,500 $1,100
- 2,500—5,000 $1,650
- 5,000—10,000 $2,200
- 10,000—25,000 $2,750
- 25,000—50,000 $3,300
- 50,000—75,000 $4,400
- 75,000—100,000 $5,500
- 100,000—250,000 $7,700
- 250,000—500,000 $11,000
- 500,000—1,000,000 $16,500
- 1,000,000—2,000,000 $22,000
- 2,000,000—3,000,000 $27,500

Please remit checks to:
Great Lakes & St. Lawrence Cities Initiative
20 North Wacker Dr. Suite 2700
Chicago, IL 60606
admin@glslcities.org

Canadian dues will be paid in Canadian dollars and U.S. dues in U.S. dollars. Counties or Regions may join at half the price if cities representing more than half of their population are already members.