



Targeting your market of SE MN cities couldn't be easier for you than becoming a Community Partner with the Southeastern Minnesota League of Municipalities (SEMLM). Below is some background information about the SEMLM and how it works. Read more to see how effectively this program reaches the cities you serve. Contact me with any questions you have about the SEMLM or becoming a SEMLM Community Partner for the coming year.

How big is the SEMLM?

The SEMLM began in the 1960s, and our current membership includes **61 member cities from eight counties: Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Olmsted, Mower, Wabasha, and Winona**. There are no other regional city leagues in Minnesota, so we are very unique. We started as a three-county group of cities in the early 60s, and began expanding in the late 1990s to six and then eight counties of cities.

A question that pops up quite often is whether we are a subset of the League of Minnesota Cities. We are not. The SEMLM is a free-standing organization, though the LMC likes to partner with us for activities and events in our joint membership area. They have found it very advantageous to hold events with us, because we have a very loyal membership and good connections with our membership.

What's the focus of the SEMLM? How often do you meet?

Our membership meets four times per year, January, April, July, and October, for educational sessions with speakers on a broad range of topics, and to work on legislative policies for our region. The **Community Partners are invited to attend the January, April, and July events each year, with two complimentary registrations for each of these events as part of your partnership fee (\$150 value)**. The April meeting will feature an opportunity for Partners to have **exhibits or booth displays** for a very good way to promote the services your organization offers. We also offer extended **educational training sessions and workshops**, usually in the afternoon before the April meeting. That can be another opportunity for a sponsor to share their expertise with the membership. More information on Partner opportunities for sharing with the membership is in the attached application sheet.

Besides **educational activities** with our member cities, we are also **active legislatively**, without partisan bias. Other statewide city organizations cannot undertake regional issues without dividing their membership. The SEMLM especially focuses on promoting issues that are truly specific to our region, and it's been very successful for our membership. We build relationships with our region's legislators, to the point that they contact our group for information on our membership's stance and input on topics.

Who attends?

Meetings are usually attended by city elected officials, administrators, clerks, and others depending on the specific focus of the event. Sometimes we have events that are of special interest to public works staff, EDA directors, or other city departments, and these expand the audience beyond the usual elected officials and administrators.

Meeting format?

The meetings are in the evenings at various host cities, and the format includes a social time starting at 6:00 p.m., dinner at 6:30, a brief business meeting at 7:00, and speakers or forums after that. Most meetings end at 8:30, with informal networking as long as people choose after that. We are a very social group, and there is always a meal and cash bar. Attendance can vary, but we usually see 60 or more attendees at a typical meeting. We have had meetings of over 100 attendees for particularly hot topics.

Communication tools for Community Partners to use?

We have a quarterly electronic newsletter, and there will be a variety of opportunities for Partners to keep their organization's name in the minds of our membership. Ads, new services, project updates, and other content from your organization can be featured in the e-newsletter to let our member cities know what you have to offer. The newsletters go both to city halls and directly to city officials across the entire eight-county area to all cities in the region, even those not members of SEMLM, for a very thorough coverage of cities in this region. The SEMLM newsletter can be another effective tool for reaching your market of SE MN cities.

Questions about the Community Partners Program can be directed to the SEMLM staff person, Brenda Johnson, at brenda@semlm.org, or (507) 867-4650.