

# MUNICIPAL HOME RULE PROGRAM

City/Town of Huntington

2025  
PROGRESS  
REPORT

WV Municipal Home Rule Board  
1900 Kanawha Blvd. E  
Bldg. 1, Ste. W-300  
Charleston, WV 25305  
[MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov](mailto:MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov)  
304.558.3356


Rev. 08.01.24

**West Virginia State Code §8-1-5a (m) provides:**

“Commencing December 1, 2015, and each year thereafter, each participating municipality shall give a progress report to the Municipal Home Rule Board and commencing January 1, 2016, and each year thereafter, the Municipal Home Rule Board shall give a summary report of all the participating municipalities to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.”

The Municipal Home Rule Board has developed this standard format for Home Rule Program participating municipalities to prepare and submit their respective Annual Progress Reports. The intent of this standard format is to gather and compile information in a consistent, easily understood, and efficient manner that will be used to develop a concise and practical summary report to the Joint Committee on Government and Finance.

**Annual Progress Reports must be submitted electronically as an individual file in PDF format no later than the close of business on the first business day of December, by emailing to WV Municipal Home Rule Board at [MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov](mailto:MunicipalHomeRule@wv.gov).**

<b>A. General Information</b>		
Name of Municipality: City of Huntington		
Certifying Official: Patrick Farrell	Title: Mayor	
Contact Person: Kathy Burks	Title: Finance Director	
Address: P.O. Box 1659		
City, State, Zip: Huntington, WV 25717		
Telephone Number: 304-696-5540 Ext. 2305	Fax Number:	
E-Mail Address: burksk@huntingtonwv.gov		
2020 Census Population:		
<b>B. Municipal Classification</b>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Class I <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Class II <input type="checkbox"/> Class III <input type="checkbox"/> Class IV		
<b>C. Attest</b>		
I hereby confirm that I am the authorized official for this municipality and certify that the information submitted herein and attached hereto is true and accurate and that this report addresses each and every initiative included in the original Home Rule Pilot Program Plan Application for this municipality and any subsequent amendments, if applicable.		
Mayor Patrick Farrell		11/17/25
Type Name of Certifying Official	Signature of Certifying Official	Date

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

<b>Initiative: Fire Damage Insurance Proceeds</b>
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? 2008
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
<p><b>SUCSESSES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>The City of Huntington’s original Home Rule application included a provision requiring insurance companies to withhold a portion of insurance proceeds to cover potential demolition costs. In 2010, the West Virginia Legislature addressed this matter through the Home Rule Pilot Program. Subsequently, on April 26, 2010, Huntington City Council repealed the existing Fire Insurance Proceeds ordinance.</p> <p>On June 16, 2010, Governor Joe Manchin signed the Fire Insurance Proceeds Bill into law. Since that time, in instances of fire damage within the city limits involving insured properties, either property owners have assumed responsibility for the demolition of affected structures without the need for City intervention or, on the few occasions when they did not, the City has recourse to be reimbursed through the owner’s insurance company.</p>
<p><b>LESSONS LEARNED</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>Because this issue has implications beyond the City of Huntington, addressing it through the state legislature was the most effective way to ensure a broader, statewide impact.</p>

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

<b>Initiative: Increased Capacity To Collect City Fees/Taxes</b>
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? August 24, 2009
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
<p><b>SUCSESSES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>Articles 773.12–14 of the City Code require that all past-due municipal and refuse fees be paid in full prior to the transfer of any property. In conjunction, Article 773.15 authorizes the City to impose statutory liens on delinquent accounts without the need for formal legal action. Together, these provisions serve as an effective revenue recovery mechanism, capturing funds that might otherwise remain uncollected. The associated costs are minimal and primarily consist of internal labor to process requests, court filing fees to record and release liens, and the cost of certified mailings. To offset a portion of these expenses, the City assesses a \$34 court cost upon payment of each lien.</p> <p>Beginning in the first quarter of 2016, the City implemented a quarterly process to file liens on all accounts more than 30 days delinquent, and with balances exceeding \$100. As part of these strengthened collection efforts, the City strives to file approximately 600 notices of lien each month. Because liens attach to all properties owned by the debtor within city limits, it is common for outstanding balances on multiple properties, both liened and un-liened to be satisfied through proceeds at the time of sale.</p> <p>In practice, under Articles 773.12–14, closing attorneys routinely contact the City to obtain payoff amounts prior to settlement. Article 773.15 applies both during property sales and refinances. Between January 1 and October 31, 2025, a total of 683 payoff requests resulted in successful property transfers, with only six requests seeking negotiation of penalties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 80% had a balance at the time of request</li> <li>• 84% paid in full at or before closing</li> <li>• 41% had a balance over \$100 at the time of request</li> <li>• 14 out of 683 paid on additional property other than the one requested</li> <li>• From January 1, 2025 – October 31, 2025, we have collected a total of \$364,148.51</li> </ul> <p>The City has collected under Art. 77.12-14 and under 773.15 and finds both ordinances to be very effective</p>
<p><b>LESSONS LEARNED</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>The drawbacks associated with these ordinances are minimal, particularly when weighed against the financial return. The primary costs are administrative and relate to maintaining accurate address records to ensure proper issuance of liens. When a property carries an outstanding balance, but no lien has been filed, the likelihood of transfer without the City’s knowledge increases significantly. Accordingly, continued education and outreach to attorneys and title companies are essential, and efforts to inform property owners remain an ongoing priority.</p>

Please use this page to report progress on each **non-tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application and Amendment(s). Each non-tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

<b>Initiative: Land Bank Fast Track Authority</b>
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input type="checkbox"/>
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? August 24, 2009
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
<p><b>SUCSESSES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>On January 22, 2018, the City of Huntington amended its Land Reuse Agency ordinance under the authority granted by the 2014 West Virginia statute, <i>W. Va. Code §31-18E-1 et seq.</i>, which removed jurisdiction over Land Reuse Agencies from the oversight of the Home Rule Board. The amended ordinance established a separate Land Reuse Agency, transferring responsibility and authority from the Huntington Urban Renewal Authority (HURA). Prior to this change, and pursuant to authorization by the Home Rule Board, HURA had been serving in the dual capacity of the City’s Urban Renewal Authority and Land Reuse Agency. In 2017, a lawsuit was filed challenging HURA’s authority to act in that capacity. As a result, the City created a distinct statutory Land Reuse Agency, and all related assets were transferred from HURA to the new agency. The lawsuit was subsequently settled without a court ruling.</p> <p>With the Land Reuse Agency now operating under statutory authority, its activities are no longer part of the City’s Home Rule program. Huntington’s leadership and progress in this area have influenced statewide policy, leading to the creation of more than ten new Land Reuse Agencies across West Virginia. The City continues to prioritize slum and blight prevention through proactive land management and redevelopment initiatives.</p>
<p><b>LESSONS LEARNED</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>The Land Bank Program established under the City’s Home Rule authority proved highly successful, prompting the West Virginia Legislature to enact statewide legislation authorizing all municipalities to create similar programs. In response, the City of Huntington adopted an ordinance consistent with the new statutory framework, serving as a “safe harbor” to ensure the continued lawful operation of its Land Reuse Agency. Building on the success of local and regional Land Reuse Agencies, state lawmakers also expanded municipal <i>Right of First Refusal</i> authority, thereby limiting opportunities for speculative investors to profit from county tax sales. In 2022, the Legislature enacted significant reforms to the tax sale process, including but not limited to requiring advance submission of the list of lands to be sold to the County Clerk, Sheriff, and the West Virginia Land Stewardship Corporation; providing notice to redeem for primary residents of properties sold at tax sale; and reducing the period to challenge a tax deed from three years to two.</p>

Please use this page to report progress on each **tax related initiative** included in your Home Rule Application. Each tax related initiative must be listed on a separate page.

<b>Initiative: Municipal Occupation Tax/Municipal Sales – Use Tax</b>				
Was this tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> or N/A <input type="checkbox"/>				
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No				
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? August 9, 2010				
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).				
Plan Amendment on March 2011 – Approval by Home Rule Board. Municipal Sales-Use Tax enacted April 4, 2011.				
<b>REVENUES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting revenue amounts and revenue categories realized; revenue amounts and revenue categories reduced; net revenue gain; and, any metrics used to track performance.				
<p>The City of Huntington implemented a one percent (1.0%) Municipal Retail Sales, Service, and Use Tax on January 1, 2012. Since that time, the City has successfully eliminated the Business and Occupation (B&amp;O) Tax for the Manufacturing classification. The implementation process was efficient and without complications. All relevant ZIP code data was provided by the City to the West Virginia State Tax Department, which administers and collects the tax on the City’s behalf.</p> <p>During the COVID-19 pandemic, the City further elected to eliminate the B&amp;O Tax for Retail and Restaurant classifications to provide economic relief and support to local businesses. This decision resulted in an approximate \$2 million reduction in B&amp;O revenue. Despite this decrease, local retailers have demonstrated strong cooperation, and the administrative impact has remained minimal due to the State’s user-friendly online reporting system.</p>				
<b>Fiscal Year</b>	<b>B&amp;O Tax</b>	<b>Sales Tax</b>	<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>Difference</b>
<b>FY2012</b>	\$16,112,357	\$2,225,745	\$18,338,102	-
<b>FY2025</b>	\$16,221,978	\$9,851,155	\$26,073,133	<b>\$7,735,031</b>
<p>Since the introduction of the Municipal Sales and Use Tax, B&amp;O Tax collections have grown by an average of approximately \$100,000, while sales tax revenue has increased by an average of \$7.6 million—resulting in a combined net revenue gain of roughly \$7.7 million.</p> <p>Looking ahead, B&amp;O Tax collections are projected to continue increasing despite the elimination of Manufacturing and Retail &amp; Restaurant classifications. This continued growth is largely attributed to the City’s ongoing investment in infrastructure, business development, and economic revitalization initiatives that support long-term stability and expansion of the local tax base.</p>				
<b>SUCCESSSES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting projects, improvements, programming, etc. realized through the implementation of this revenue initiative and any metrics used to track performance.				
By restructuring its local tax system, the City has effectively reduced the tax burden on manufacturing and retail operations, improving overall business climate and encouraging continued investment.				
<b>LESSONS LEARNED</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.				
Ongoing analysis of revenue trends remains essential to ensuring the long-term sustainability of the City’s budget. One of the primary objectives in reducing B&O Taxes was to stimulate economic development and attract new business investment within city limits. Additionally, continued auditing of businesses located near municipal boundaries is critical to confirm proper application and remittance of the additional one percent (1%) Municipal Sales and Use Tax.				

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<b>Initiative: Alternative Enforcement of External Sanitation &amp; Common Nuisances</b>
Was this non-tax initiative a part of your original plan application <input type="checkbox"/> or a plan amendment <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Has the ordinance(s) needed to implement this initiative been enacted? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, when was the ordinance enacted? May 23, 2013
If no, please describe challenges faced in enacting the related ordinance(s).
<p><b>SUCSESSES</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative which highlights successes realized through the implementation of this initiative and any metrics used to track performance.</p> <p>This initiative has functioned exactly as intended. During the first six months following its adoption, a significant number of citations were issued, prompting residents to comply with City codes and improve property conditions. The program has since evolved into a compliance-focused system, emphasizing education and warnings before enforcement. Citations continue to be issued to repeat offenders and individuals who fail to comply after notice.</p>
<p><b>LESSONS LEARNED</b> – In the space below, please provide a brief narrative highlighting lessons learned during implementation of this revenue initiative that would benefit other municipalities.</p> <p>The shift to a warning-based system has been equally effective in achieving compliance while significantly reducing the number of court appearances required by inspectors, thereby allowing for a more efficient use of their time and resources.</p>