



Municipal Association  
of South Carolina<sup>SM</sup>

# Annual Report

2019



**Eric Budds**

Interim Executive Director

The Annual Report offers the opportunity to reflect on the past year's activities and gauge the Municipal Association's effectiveness in advancing our mission — providing our members with the knowledge, resources, shared solutions and collective voice they need to govern South Carolina's cities and towns effectively while increasing economic vitality and improving the lives of residents.

While thinking of the past year, what astonishes me is the overwhelming level of member support for and participation in the Association's programs and services. Approximately 5,700 elected officials and staff members, representing nearly 200 of the 271 cities and towns in South Carolina, participated in at least one of the Association's programs or events. Equally impressive is the broad and ever-expanding array of programs, services and diverse platforms highlighted in this report.

The Association commissioned a comprehensive survey to measure member and external stakeholder perception of the Association and to identify programmatic priorities and opportunities to increase engagement and member value. Participation rates in this survey were outstanding, with 768 surveys completed. The overall survey results were extremely positive. However, some suggestions emerged such as enhanced advocacy, tailored programs and services based on member resources and demographics, as well as more ways to access these offerings by leveraging technology. The survey also brought to light that many members are unaware of various programs and services offered by the Association and how these programs impact the state's cities and towns.

The staff of the Association strives to continually improve the offerings of the Municipal Association and incorporate member feedback. Additional opportunities will be explored to enhance communications and to provide a better understanding of the Association's programs and services. New initiatives will be investigated to more fully meet member needs. As a first step toward improving awareness, I encourage you to carefully read this report and the directory of services for a broader understanding of the offerings provided by the Association and the various delivery methods.

Thank you for your participation and support of your Association. We remain as committed as ever to advance our mission and promote the undisputable fact that the more we work together with a unified vision, mission and voice, the more effectively we can create cities and towns that are more resilient, healthier, vibrant and diverse — places that residents and businesses wish to call home. Strong cities create a stronger South Carolina.



# South Carolina by the Numbers

**271**

Municipalities

**1,592**

Elected officials

**19,918**

Municipal staff

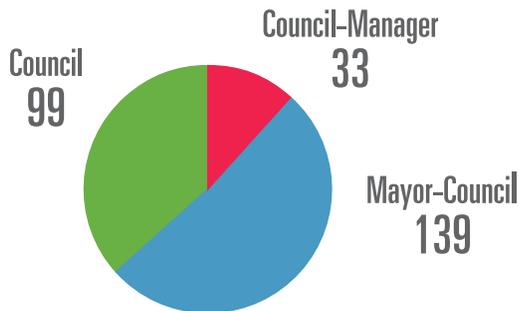
## Municipalities by Councils of Governments



Appalachian Council of Governments	42
Berkeley-Charleston-Dorchester Council of Governments	27
Catawba Regional Council of Governments	22
Central Midlands Council of Governments	29
Lowcountry Council of Governments	21
Lower Savannah Council of Governments	45
Pee Dee Regional Council of Governments	33
Santee-Lynches Regional Council of Governments	12
Upper Savannah Council of Governments	24
Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments	16

Formed in 1930, the Municipal Association of South Carolina represents and serves the state's 271 incorporated municipalities. The Association is dedicated to the principle of its founding members: to offer the services, programs and tools that will give municipal officials the knowledge, experience and resources to support the most efficient and effective operation of their municipalities in the complex world of municipal government.

## Forms of Government



## Population



# Shared Voices

South Carolina cities and towns first established the Municipal Association of South Carolina in part because officials knew collaboration would greatly amplify and strengthen their messages.

## Advocacy

During the 2018 Regional Advocacy Meetings, 265 local officials came together to share their needs and concerns. The Association's Advocacy Initiatives, which emerged from those meetings, saw success in the General Assembly this session.

Two of the three initiatives passed the General Assembly: creating greater reliability in the Local Government Fund formula and providing more funding to the SC Criminal Justice Academy to help decrease wait times for training new officers. The remaining item, allowing accommodations and hospitality taxes to pay for flooding and drainage in tourism areas, passed the Senate and is well-positioned for action by the House in 2020.

Another passed bill that is beneficial to municipalities requires any entity that starts a road project to pay for the relocation of publicly owned water and sewer lines. An additional passed bill extended the Abandoned Buildings Revitalization Act through 2021. The Association's advocacy team also successfully negotiated with the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office for an agreement whereby Revenue and Fiscal Affairs will use software developed by the Association to establish an online business license renewal portal, which makes the renewal process easier and illustrates to businesses around the state that municipalities are working to be more business-friendly.

The SC Building Codes Council established new building code modifications at the recommendation of the Building Officials Association of SC, a Municipal Association affiliate organization. One of the successful code changes reclassified agritourism businesses, lessening their regulatory burden.

Advocacy success requires local officials to be engaged in the legislative process and add their voices to those coming from the Association through personal legislator contact and testimony at hearings. Cayce Mayor Elise Partin exemplified the importance of such engagement through her participation during the 2019 legislative session. By providing timely input to staff and her legislative delegation, she effectively helped the Association's efforts to amend a proviso, rendering it harmless to municipalities.

"Knowing that the Association staff has their finger on the pulse of legislative issues allows me to focus on my city," Partin said. "I know that when they call for me to reach out to my representatives that it matters and that my voice — our voice as leaders and caretakers of our cities and towns — is important. It's a powerful relationship that, along with our legislators, makes all the difference."

## Member Survey

The Association embarked on the first phases of a three-part branding initiative that will help identify the organization's strengths and areas for opportunities among members and stakeholders. This research phase included online and print surveys of the general membership and interviews with both legislators and a cross-section of members. The initiative aims to better convey the breadth and value of the services of the Association to cities and towns, as well as external stakeholders, including legislators.

## Communication Tools

The Municipal Association strengthened its communication methods by offering timely topics through the relaunch of the *City Connect* blog and *City Quick Connect* podcast. The Association also created a social media toolkit for cities and towns to help staff and elected officials engage with residents more effectively.

# 352

tracked General Assembly bills impacting cities and towns including eight bills that would preempt local authority — part of the Association's work defending against harmful legislation

# 4,858

email subscribers to **From the Dome to Your Home**, the weekly legislative update

# 600+

tweets about timely issues and legislative developments

# 9,694

page views on [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc), a **3% increase**

# 587

municipal officials who attended Hometown Legislative Action Day, representing

# 123 municipalities

# 758

plays on relaunched **City Quick Connect** podcast

# Shared Knowledge

Education is a core tenet of the Association with multiple training opportunities available throughout the many programs and services.

## Training

The Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government, a critical part of the Association's work of training elected officials, launched the Advanced Continuing Education track. This track gives graduates of the Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute a way to stay current on the latest topics in local government and receive detailed training. Following the first ACE session in February, some attendees pledged to take back to their municipalities their newly gained knowledge on executive sessions, public meetings and public records, with one saying "there's always something to learn, and with each class I've learned something new." The Association has also updated all MEO Institute on-demand training courses with new videos and resources.

## Resources

The Association provides staff support for 12 affiliate organizations offering professional development. The SC Municipal Human Resources Association, for example, serves as an invaluable resource because of the personnel issues specific to municipalities, according to Rebecca Mejia-Ward, Hartsville's human resources manager and MHRA president.

"The MHRA listserv is a window to other cities and agencies and their successes and failures," Mejia-Ward said. "New HR employees that may not have a public sector background can lean on the experience and support of others who have experienced what they have making the change from private sector. The willingness to share candid and open information about their processes, procedures, programs and innovations creates a unity and trust that is unique to this very active listserv."

## Downtown Development

Main Street South Carolina, the downtown development technical assistance program, expanded to include multiple membership levels to provide greater assistance based on community needs. Dillon joined at the new Friends of Main Street level, designed for programs that are building capacity. Bridget Thornton, Dillon's downtown coordinator, said that joining Main Street "has helped us establish specific goals within a set timeframe and establish transparency through public input. As a member, I now feel confident that I have the tools and resources needed as we build our best Dillon."

Greenwood recently joined Main Street SC at the Classic level. Lara Hudson, Uptown Greenwood manager, said "the revitalization Uptown Greenwood underwent over the past 10 years provided many opportunities for growth and development of our Uptown district. We are now at a pivotal place. By joining Main Street SC, using the Four-Point Approach and networking with other Main Street SC communities, we can successfully take our Uptown to the next level."

Main Street SC also rolled out an economic incentives toolkit to help highlight ways to assist in the rehabilitation of historic properties, featuring the state's abandoned building credit and federal tax credits as well. The project has been highlighted by the National Main Street Center.

**4.0** the perfect evaluation score for the MEOI Advanced Continuing Education state ethics session  
the first perfect score of any Association training session

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**4,175+** municipal and elected officials representing

**204** cities and towns registered for

**94** educational programs

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**8** new Main Street SC members

**26** total Main Street SC members

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**88%**

retention rate for affiliate membership based on 186 participating cities and towns

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At least one official from  
**204 cities and towns** attended at least one Association event.

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Field Service Managers conducted **dozens** of specialized training or strategic planning sessions for cities and towns.

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**29**  
Achievement Award entries

This year's winners:  
Bluffton  
Cayce  
Eutawville  
Goose Creek  
Hartsville

North Augusta  
Orangeburg  
Seabrook Island  
Seneca

# Shared Solutions

Cities and towns from across South Carolina face common challenges. Municipal officials and staff can find efficient solutions by working together through the Association.

## Insurance

The SC Municipal Insurance Trust and SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund are cooperative efforts that offer valuable insurance coverage and resources for members. Both programs retained 100 percent of their members. In 2018, the SCMIT board approved returning a surplus of \$3 million to members who renewed coverage for 2019, a move made possible by the stability of the self-funded programs. Since 2007, the Association's insurance programs have returned \$42.2 million to members.

The insurance programs provide support in some of the most trying times experienced by local governments. The SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund staff immediately went to work assisting cities and towns when Hurricane Florence came through the state and impacted members such as the Town of Cheraw and the City of Conway.

Risk Management Services debuted a new online claims submission portal in 2016. Members quickly adopted the online process and now, 100 percent of all claims are submitted through the online portal. "The NavRisk online portal is a great addition to the Municipal Association's claims process," Georgetown Human Resources Director/Risk Manager Suzanne Anderson said. The underwriting staff is also working to educate members on the NavRisk policy portal. "The system is user-friendly and greatly expedites the process of submitting claims as well as creating endorsements for insurance schedules," said Anderson.

## Risk Response

Police and fire services have some of the greatest risk exposures of all municipal workers. The Municipal Association's Risk Management Services developed two new training programs: "Risk Management in Police Operations" and "Emergency Vehicle Operations and Risk Management."

The Manning Police Department participated in law enforcement simulator training offered by the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund. "The training proved to be useful in allowing the officers the opportunity to see themselves perform under stress in various shooting scenarios," Manning Police Chief Keith Grice said. "Although no two threats are identical, the training provides officers ways on how to approach and respond to different threats they may encounter on the street."

## Grant Opportunities

For several years, the Association has awarded Hometown Economic Development Grants, which support economic development projects to enhance quality of life. The Town of Brunson received one of these grants in 2018, which the town plans to use for landscaping improvements and sidewalk lighting, Administrator/Clerk Barbara Junior said. "The Hometown Economic Development Grant affords us the opportunity to invest in our town. With these improvements, we hope to attract tourists traveling through the town, and also encourage industries, businesses and vendors to locate to the Town of Brunson," she said.

Grant opportunities are also available to the members of the SC Municipal Insurance Trust and SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund. The two program boards agreed to increase total grant funds available for 2019. These grants can help save the lives of police, fire and public works employees by funding protective gear such as soft body armor, fire turn-out gear and reflective vests. The SCMIRF Law Enforcement Grant helps to provide funding for equipment and other items to help reduce law enforcement liability claims.

**126** members of  
SC Municipal Insurance Trust

**122** members of  
SC Municipal Insurance and  
Risk Financing Fund

**\$4.2 billion**  
total value insured through SCMIT and  
SCMIRF, up from \$3.7 billion last year

**17,559** insured  
for workers' compensation  
through SCMIT

**300,000+**  
debt- and tax-related records reviewed by  
the Municipal Association's Collections  
Programs

**13,000+**  
LocalGovU courses taken

**480** attendees  
in Risk Management Services training,  
including Defensive Drivers Training, Below  
100 Police Officer Training, Fire Liability  
Training, and Risk Management 101

**1,150** officers  
participated in law enforcement  
simulator training, representing  
33 departments

**\$350,000**  
total available Risk Management Services  
grant funds, up from \$305,000 last year  
More than \$2.8 million in grants awarded to date

The Setoff Debt Collection Program  
hosted new regional meetings to  
further educate participants.

Nearly **\$318,000** awarded  
through 13 Hometown Economic  
Development Grants  
Winners: Bamberg, Batesburg-Leesville,  
Blacksburg, Brunson, Central, Conway,  
Gifford, Laurens, Lowrys, Moncks Corner,  
Orangeburg, Richburg, Saluda

# Internal Services

**The internal services of the Association, such as technology, finance and human resources, play a critical role in providing support to the Association staff so that the organization can deliver valuable services to South Carolina's cities and towns and continue to seek ways to improve its efficiency.**

In the past year, the Association has increased its usage of online forms for everything from event registration to grant applications and award nominations. Staff upgraded the Association's membership software to keep current with licensing requirements and technical advances. Staff also took the opportunity to streamline business processes that involve database management.

The Municipal Online Directory received a legislative enhancement. The online directory offers real-time municipal contact information as well as lists of South Carolina cities and towns organized by population, county and council of government. The directory enhancement includes searching or browsing for a state legislator, viewing a list of municipalities that a legislator represents and connecting users to a legislator's State House profile.

The finance area of the Association worked with consultants to streamline the organization's banking structure as well as increase investment earnings that are reinvested into the programs and services offered to South Carolina's cities and towns.

While placing a focus on quality educational opportunities, the Association completed a major upgrade to its audiovisual equipment and furnishings in the training room at the Association's office, where training sessions are held throughout the year. The capital investment in the new equipment includes an advanced projector system, improved audio and microphone systems as well as a flexible system for presenting from multiple devices.





# Directory of Services

More than 85 years ago, a small group of local elected officials realized they had to work together to meet the challenges of the changing times. With this mission in mind, they organized the Municipal Association of South Carolina.

The Municipal Association is still dedicated to the principle of its founding members: to join together to pursue initiatives cities and towns can carry out more efficiently and effectively by working together through the Association than by working individually.

A nonpartisan, nonprofit association representing all of the state's 271 incorporated cities and towns, the Municipal Association fulfills its mission through **shared voices**, **shared knowledge** and **shared solutions**.

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## Shared Voices

From the very start of the Association in the early 1930s, South Carolina municipal officials understood that only by working together could they effectively communicate the needs and views of municipal government to state and federal lawmakers.

### Lobbying the State Legislature and Congress

The Association advocates for changes in state law to address city challenges and testifies against legislation that would harm cities. Partnerships play an important part in the Association's advocacy efforts. The Association also monitors federal legislation through the National League of Cities and advocates on behalf of South Carolina cities and towns when federal issues impact the state. *Staff Contact: Tigerron Wells*

### Regional Advocacy Meetings

Each fall, the Association hosts 10 Regional Advocacy Meetings around the state to talk about the challenges facing cities and towns and how changes to state law could help meet those challenges. Based in part on input gathered during these conversations, the Association's legislative committee and board of directors set the Association's annual Advocacy Initiatives. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

### Legislative Tracking and Reports

During the South Carolina legislative session, the Association actively monitors bills impacting cities and towns and updates the Association's online tracking system to reflect relevant daily bill activity. The online tracking system gives municipal leaders another tool they can use to follow subcommittee, committee and floor action.

Each Friday during the legislative session, municipal officials receive *From the Dome to Your Home*, which recaps the week's major legislative events and previews the upcoming week's activities. The report is posted on the Association's website and shared with more than 5,000 social media followers. The legislative team expands on the report with additional information through regular episodes of the *City Quick Connect* podcast during the legislative session.

At the end of the legislative session, the Association produces its annual legislative report recapping work on the Advocacy Initiatives and legislative action on major bills of municipal interest.

*Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

## **Hometown Legislative Action Day**

In February, Hometown Legislative Action Day draws local officials from all over the state to Columbia to get updates on current legislative issues, visit their local legislators at the State House and connect with legislators at the Association's annual legislative reception. *Staff Contact: Tigerron Wells*

## **Public Engagement**

Legislators, business leaders, the news media and key influencers learn about successes in cities and towns through online and print resources.

### **Social Media Channels**

The Association's Twitter (@MuniAssnSC) and Facebook (MuniAssnSC.StrongSCcities) accounts provide up-to-the-minute information on State House activity and share good news stories about cities and towns. A regular schedule of social media posts highlighting *Uptown* stories amplifies the online version of the monthly newsletter and resources on the Association's website. The Association's Instagram account (StrongSCcities) highlights the strength and services of South Carolina's 271 cities and towns. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

### **Publication Partnerships**

Several successful publication partnerships spotlight ways strong cities underpin the state's economic development success.

The Association partners with *Columbia Business Monthly* and *Greenville Business Magazine* by providing a bimonthly column highlighting business-friendly practices in cities and towns. The partnership with *SC Biz* magazine to publish the Association's biannual *Cities Mean Business* magazine highlights how city amenities, initiatives and services improve residents' quality of life, which helps attract investment.

Through these partnerships, the value of cities to the state's economic health reaches a wide audience of business leaders and state policy makers. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

### **City Connect Blog and City Quick Connect Podcast**

The *City Connect* blog offers short, timely updates on a variety of issues. The blog packages information in a format that is useful not only to local officials but also to the news media, legislators and the public. The *City Quick Connect* podcast gives listeners a chance to hear the latest from Municipal Association staff and others about the issues, the legislation and the support services impacting cities and towns. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

## **Shared Knowledge**

The Association plays an important role in developing municipal elected officials' and employees' knowledge and skills through a wide range of training programs, publications and meetings.

### **Affiliate Associations**

The Municipal Association supports 12 affiliate organizations by providing training and networking for a variety of local government positions with specialized training needs.

In addition to traditional face-to-face training and networking opportunities, the affiliate associations offer online communities for members to share best practices and to pose specific questions related to their local government responsibilities. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

### **Association of South Carolina Mayors**

The Association of South Carolina Mayors provides opportunities for its members to more fully engage in advocating for issues that affect cities and towns, network, take part in educational activities, and share ideas and best practices. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

**Building Officials Association of SC**

The Building Officials Association of SC is a professional development organization of building and code enforcement officials. Members are dedicated to safeguarding life, health and property through the uniform application, interpretation and enforcement of building codes adopted by local governments. BOASC offers education and training opportunities to its members, promotes the importance of building codes and their enforcement, monitors issues before the SC Building Codes Council and the General Assembly, and provides technical assistance to local government officials.  
*Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

**Municipal Court Administration Association of SC**

The Municipal Court Administration Association of South Carolina offers training at two workshops for court administrators, clerks of court, municipal judges and other municipal employees involved in court administration. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization and the Office of Victims Services recognize these workshops for continuing education credits.  
*Staff Contact: Sara Snell*

**Municipal Technology Association of SC**

The Municipal Technology Association of SC promotes municipalities’ effective use of technology. MTASC exposes its members to a broad range of technology systems, platforms and solutions. The training serves IT staff and those with GIS responsibilities, in addition to employees who work in other departments but have technology-related duties. *Staff Contact: Sara Snell*

**SC Association of Municipal Power Systems**

Twenty of the municipal electric utilities are members of the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems. Originally, SCAMPS existed solely for its members to help one another during times of disaster. Although mutual aid is still the backbone of SCAMPS, the affiliate’s scope also includes legislative initiatives and training. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*

**SC Association of Stormwater Managers**

The SC Association of Stormwater Managers offers its members quarterly training on stormwater management policies and best practices. The SC Board of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors recognizes the quarterly training sessions for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Snell*

**SC Business Licensing Officials Association**

The South Carolina Business Licensing Officials Association promotes best practices for administering and enforcing the local business license tax. Through rigorous training sessions, members learn skills and practices that make licensing in their cities and towns more efficient and business friendly.

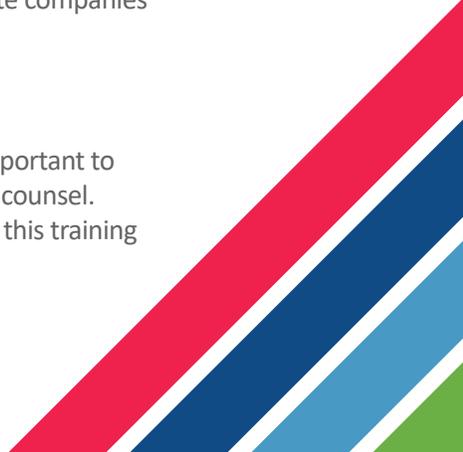
The professional designation programs of Accreditation in Business Licensing and Masters in Business Licensing reflects members’ dedication to continuing education. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

**SC Community Development Association**

The South Carolina Community Development Association provides educational forums for its members to address economic and community development needs. Members include municipal, county, regional and state community development professionals; employees of private companies with an interest in community development; elected officials; and volunteers.  
*Staff Contact: Sara Snell*

**SC Municipal Attorneys Association**

The South Carolina Municipal Attorneys Association’s annual meeting covers issues important to municipal attorneys, whether working as municipal staff or as a municipality’s outside counsel. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization approves this training session for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Tigerron Wells*



## **SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association**

The South Carolina Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association offers training programs covering the diverse responsibilities of its members. All of the training sessions qualify for a combination of continuing education credits for certified municipal clerks, certified public accountants and certified public treasurers. MFOCTA sponsors the Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute with the Municipal Association and the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities. *Staff Contact: Jeff Shacker*

## **SC Municipal Human Resources Association**

The South Carolina Municipal Human Resources Association promotes sound human resources administration and encourages innovative programs. Through its training programs, MHRA provides information and the opportunity to exchange ideas among its members. The national Human Resources Certification Institute and the Society for Human Resources Management recognize this training for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Snell*

## **SC Utility Billing Association**

The South Carolina Utility Billing Association provides training and networking opportunities for its members, including billing clerks, meter readers and department managers. SCUBA's meetings encompass a variety of topics focused on customer service, safety in the workplace, and new technologies to increase the efficiencies of utility billing and collections. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

## **Training Institutes**

Educational opportunities are available to municipal officials and staff through four training institutes.

### **SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government**

The SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government trains elected officials to increase their understanding of local government operations. Elected officials take seven required courses to complete the institute. The required courses consist of two day-long sessions held each February in Columbia the day after Hometown Legislative Action Day and five additional classes, held yearly at the 10 councils of governments' locations or through an on-demand format found on the Association's website. *Staff Contact: Urica Floyd*

### **SC Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government**

Offered exclusively for graduates of the MEO Institute, the Advanced Institute gives elected officials the opportunity to continue their education. To complete the Advanced Institute, participants must take four of the six offered courses that explore in greater depth topics included in the MEO Institute and other topics critical for effective municipal operations. Advanced Institute graduates also have the opportunity to participate in the Advanced Continuing Education program.

*Staff Contact: Urica Floyd*

### **Business Licensing Training Institute**

The Business Licensing Training Institute educates municipal and county officials on the basics of administering a business licensing program. To complete the institute, officials must complete three day-long training classes, which are offered across three years. Once they complete the training classes, officials may take an exam to earn the Accreditation in Business Licensing credential. The SC Business Licensing Officials Association sponsors the institute. *Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

### **Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute**

The Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute offers instruction in several areas, including forms of government, financial management, the role of the municipal clerk and business licensing. The Association sponsors MCTI in partnership with the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association and the College of Charleston's Joseph P. Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities. *Staff Contact: Jeff Shacker*

### Annual Meeting

Each summer, the Annual Meeting brings municipal officials together for training, networking and discussion of issues of common interest. Officials hear from state and nationally known speakers, participate in sessions, and learn about new technology and developments in local government. *Staff Contact: Ken Ivey*

### Technical Assistance

#### Field Services

The Association's two field services managers travel the state to offer hands-on technical assistance, training and consultation to help municipalities address challenges. *Staff Contacts: Charlie Barrineau and Jeff Shacker*

#### Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC helps its members revitalize their downtowns into vibrant centers of commerce and community by using the National Main Street Center's "Main Street Approach," which emphasizes organization, promotion, design and economic vitality. Main Street SC empowers member programs, of varying levels of preparedness and resources, with the knowledge, skills, tools and organizational structure necessary to succeed in downtown revitalization. At the startup level, members build capacity for downtown revitalization. At the Aspiring Main Street level, participants receive three years of intensive technical assistance and training, and then transition into a Classic Main Street program. Members at the highest level meet national accreditation standards.

Each year, Main Street SC honors exceptional member accomplishments through its Inspiration Awards. *Staff Contact: Jenny Boulware*

### Information Resources

The Association's print and online resources address hundreds of topics related to municipal government.

#### Publications

The Association publishes a variety of manuals and handbooks on topics of municipal interest.

- *Annexation Handbook*
- *Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments*
- *Election Handbook*
- *Forms and Powers of Municipal Government*
- *Handbook for Municipal Officials in South Carolina*
- *The Municipal Association of South Carolina 1930-2015: A History of Shared Voices, Shared Knowledge, Shared Solutions*
- *How to Conduct Effective Meeting*
- *Incorporation Handbook*
- *Model Employee Handbook for SC Municipalities*
- *Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory*
- *Public Official's Guide to Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act* (published by the SC Press Association)
- *Raising Hometown Voices to a New Level of Influence*, an advocacy guide
- *South Carolina Business Licensing Handbook (updated in 2019)*
- *Tips for Hometown Media Success*

*Staff Contact: Eric Budds*



## **Website**

The Municipal Association's website, [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc), offers more than 2,000 pages; 1,500 documents, presentations and links to external resources; and more than 730 in-state municipal job postings. With a responsive design to fit the needs and formats of mobile and desktop devices, the site includes a powerful search engine and information center to help users navigate to specific resources of interest. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

## **Uptown**

The monthly newsletter in print and electronic formats features articles on a variety of topics important to municipal officials. Each issue's special section looks in depth at a topic central to local government.

A weekly e-newsletter, *Uptown Update*, informs municipal officials about a variety of timely opportunities, including meeting registrations, training events and grants. A regular feature, "In Case You Missed It," gives *Uptown Update* readers a second look at past articles and posts from the Association's publications. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

## **Daily News**

*Daily News* provides links to news stories about the state's smallest rural towns to its largest cities. The articles highlight how local governments deliver services. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

## **The Uplift**

*The Uplift* delivers a collection of news links every Wednesday showcasing South Carolina cities and towns at their best. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

## **Achievement Awards**

The Achievement Awards recognize successful and innovative projects that improve the quality of life for residents and add value to communities. The program also encourages municipal officials to share ideas. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

## **Shared Solutions**

Cities and towns face many of the same challenges and can find solutions by pooling resources and ideas through the Association.

### **Collection Programs**

Municipalities contract with the Association to collect delinquent debts and certain business license taxes on their behalf. These programs provide centralized and efficient collections for participating municipalities and streamline the tax payment process for businesses. The Association provides an online portal for cities participating in the insurance, brokers, and telecommunications tax collection programs as well as the setoff debt program to securely access current and past collection program documents.

#### **Broker's Tax Collection Program**

The SC Department of Insurance collects the municipal broker's premium tax, and cities and towns contract with the Municipal Association to disburse the tax.

*Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Melissa Brown*

#### **Insurance Tax Collection Program**

The Municipal Association collects municipal business license taxes due from insurance companies and distributes the taxes owed to municipalities.

The Association notifies all insurance companies of the payment process, uses industry data to confirm all companies paid according to municipal ordinances, and provides a portal for the reporting and payment of the tax. Cities save time and money by contracting with the Association for these

services rather than all duplicating the same processes. Insurance companies save time and money by reporting to and paying one entity rather than multiple cities and towns. Many pay the tax through the Association's portal. *Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Melissa Brown, Susan Gainey*

#### **Setoff Debt Collection Program**

In cooperation with the SC Department of Revenue, the Association collects delinquent debts, such as utility bills, taxes and court fines. These payments are remitted to participating entities to whom the debts were owed. The Association provides software to all participating entities to streamline their program administration and ensure compliance with state regulations.

*Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Melissa Brown*

#### **Telecommunications Tax Collection Program**

The Association collects business license taxes owed to participating municipalities from telecommunication companies.

Cities and towns contract with the Association to collect the tax as provided for in state law. The contract streamlines the payment process for telecommunications companies. It also saves cities and towns time and money by eliminating the need for each to perform the same processes.

*Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Susan Gainey*

#### **Risk Management Services**

The two self-funded insurance programs administered by the Association's Risk Management Services staff are prime examples of strength and efficiency through combined efforts of member cities. Each program operates under the direction of a board of trustees composed of representatives from its membership.

The SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund provides all lines of property and casualty coverage, including tort liability, law enforcement liability, public officials' liability, and property and automobile coverage.

The SC Municipal Insurance Trust, provides workers' compensation coverage for municipal employees.

RMS provides grants, attorney hotlines, employee training and loss control services to members. These services help members improve risk management efforts, prevent claims and reduce the cost of insurance.

*Staff contact: Heather Ricard*

#### **Training**

RMS members have access to online and in-person training at no charge.

- Customized, on-site training: RMS provides training for members in their hometowns, allowing city employees to attend sessions together.
- Online training: The online training opportunities include a variety of risk management, human resources, safety and law enforcement topics, including use of force and pursuit driving.
- Statewide and regional training: RMS offers members regional training sessions on topics such as law enforcement liability, OSHA confined space training, risk management 101 and defensive driving.
- Risk Management Institute: RMI offers participants from SCMIT- and SCMIRF-member organizations specialized training in the role of risk manager and safety coordinator.
- *RiskLetter*: The quarterly e-newsletter provides information on a wide range of risk management topics.
- Law enforcement simulator: RMS offers members access to a law enforcement training simulator that allows officers to practice their decision-making skills and responses to resistance.

## **Loss Control/Technical Assistance**

RMS helps its members build effective safety and loss control programs.

- Model policies and procedures manuals for law enforcement and fire services: SCMIT and SCMIRF members receive updated fire and law enforcement policies.
- One-on-one technical assistance visits: The loss control staff meet with member organizations to evaluate their safety and loss control programs.
- Legal hotlines: SCMIRF members can access up to 10 hours of free legal advice on each legal hotline for labor and liability issues.
- Education tools: SCMIRF members have access to cybersecurity services through the online tool, eRisk Hub, in addition to specialized toolkits, including parks and recreation liability, public officials' liability, sewer backups, special events liability and workers' compensation.

## **Grants**

The RMS grant program helps RMS members purchase products or equipment to reduce the frequency and severity of claims.

- The Law Enforcement Liability Reduction Grant Program awards grants to member law enforcement agencies to purchase stun guns or Tasers, Taser cameras, body cameras and equipment.
- SCMIT awards grants to member law enforcement, fire and public works departments to purchase work-zone safety equipment, soft body armor and other protective gear.

## **South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust**

The South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust allows cities to set aside funds for nonpension benefits, such as retiree healthcare, as required by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board. Each member shares in the trust's administrative- and investment- related expenses, lowering the overall cost of compliance for each local government. *Staff Contact: Heather Ricard*

## **Hometown Economic Development Grants**

The Municipal Association's Hometown Economic Development Grants provide cities and towns with funds to implement economic development projects that will make a positive impact on the quality of life in their communities. The Hometown Economic Development Grants are awarded annually.

*Staff Contact: Scott Slatton*

## **Technology Services**

The Association, in partnership with VC3, provides discounted technology services to cities and towns. VC3, an information technology company headquartered in Columbia, designs and hosts municipal websites; designs and implements computer networks; and provides security, disaster recovery, strategic technology planning and voice communication services. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*

## **Cable Franchise Assistance and Telecommunication Infrastructure Siting Program**

The Association continues to partners with Local Government Services LLC, to assist members with cable franchises, pole attachment agreements, and cellular and small cell antenna leases and ordinances. This program gives local governments access to the expertise required to negotiate benefits and services with reasonable terms. *Staff Contact: Eric Budds*



# Staff

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