

2023



Municipal Association
of South Carolina

Annual Report

Leadership. It's as much an art as it is a science. In today's increasingly divided America, it is sorely needed, yet in some instances, sorely lacking.

While our country is divided now, I look back to a president of the United States who navigated our country through our most divided days. Abraham Lincoln is looked upon by many as the greatest president because of what he deftly handled. Can you imagine trying to convince the governed that you had their interests at heart after defeating them militarily?

At the conclusion of Lincoln's first inaugural address he stated, "We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory ... will yet swell the chorus of the Union, when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature."

Last year at our 2022 Annual Meeting in Charleston, the Municipal Association launched a civility initiative to return civility to local government. I am excited to say that many other state leagues have followed suit, with Georgia in particular having more than 80 "cities of civility."

We joined into a strategic partnership with the South Carolina School Boards Association to address this issue through training, messaging and awareness. I am excited about this partnership between two levels of local government coming together to address this important issue of our time.

We cannot allow ourselves to become a nation of enemies. We know that when voices are raised, ideas are lost. We must recommit ourselves to the principles of good government; hearing and respecting all points of view.

My entire career has been in local government because it is the institution closest to the people and more adept at addressing the needs of residents. We must continue to raise up leaders in local government who have vision, humility and a respect for all who have a heart for bettering their cities and towns.

As you look at our year in review in this report, know that every call, email, meeting, program and podcast was aimed at protecting, preserving and progressing your ability to lead your communities in the manner you see fit. Home Rule is the basis for all that we do. But we have to ensure that while we govern our cities and towns, everyone feels welcomed and valued in our home.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "B. Todd Glover".

B. Todd Glover
Municipal Association of SC
Executive Director



Take the Civility Pledge

"I pledge to build a stronger and more prosperous community by advocating for civil engagement, respecting others and their viewpoints, and finding solutions for the betterment of my city or town."

Other state municipal leagues that have publicized civility initiatives

- Arkansas Municipal League
- Connecticut Conference of Municipalities
- Georgia Municipal Association
- Illinois Municipal League
- League of Minnesota Cities
- Pennsylvania Municipal League
- Virginia Municipal League
- Association of Washington Cities



In 2022, the Association launched a joint civility initiative partnership with the South Carolina School Boards Association, which serves the boards of the state's 73 public school districts. The effort will encourage local elected officials, both those in municipal government and in school districts, to adopt a civility policy for their meetings and their interactions with one another.

During the announcement, Municipal Association President and Aiken Mayor Rick Osbon recalled an adage of his father – "we can disagree without being disagreeable" – as he described the importance of the effort.



Voices

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

Advocacy efforts

In the past year, Municipal Association staff has furthered its outreach with South Carolina's federal delegation, and established Congressional Briefings to give city and town officials more opportunities to connect with their U.S. representatives and senators.

Even so, municipal officials always carry the most weight when they connect to lawmakers personally, and the Association helps them know what bills they should follow. Aiken Mayor Rick Osbon was one of several mayors to testify on H3253, a bill to prohibit municipalities everywhere in the state from enacting an ordinance that regulates short-term rentals, and which remains active for the 2024 session. Osbon noted that STRs are helpful in Aiken for the Masters Tournament and horse race tourism, but councilmembers often hear from residents concerned about the appropriate regulation of them.

"I don't think that a 'one-size-fits-all' is the right approach to this. I believe that at the local level, with our enforcement agencies, we're going to find the right solution," Osbon said.

Myrtle Beach Police Chief Amy Prock testified to the General Assembly on several bills concerning municipalities. She testified on "squat trucks," or vehicles raised dangerously on the front end. The Municipal Association's board of directors named a squat truck ban as one of the Association's Advocacy Initiatives, and lawmakers passed such a bill into law. Prock also made in-person pleas on a hate crimes bill, another Advocacy Initiative. Lawmakers introduced the Clementa C. Pinckney Hate Crimes Act, which is still active for 2024.

"Law enforcement continues to charge based on the principal offenses committed by a violator, but this would allow additional penalties committed out of hate," Prock told the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee. "We hope these penalties would deter the crimes from being committed and provide comfort to victims and families."

Association communication improvements

The Municipal Association launched a landmark upgrade of its communications materials in February, creating a new visual brand that reflects the diversity of cities and towns across the state. The Association also launched a years-in-the-making rebuild of its website, www.masc.sc, bringing together information on the complete array of Association services after carefully studying the user experience to make the vast amount of information as easy to find as possible.

Association staff also worked to make its publications and other materials accessible and engaging for municipal officials. Of the Association's podcasts, listeners have praised the *From the Dome to Your Home* podcast for making complex legislative issues easy to understand.

Mauldin City Administrator Seth Duncan described himself as a longtime listener of *From the Dome to Your Home* podcasts and an avid reader of its publications because of the news and analysis they offered.

"The podcast, for me, is one of my favorite formats because I'm able to easily stay informed of activities at the State House, learn interesting facts about South Carolina, and gain valuable insights from elected officials across South Carolina," he said. The *From the Dome to Your Home* podcast is my go-to podcast every Saturday morning and provides me insight into how I can help support our legislative goals, build strong communities, and better serve the people of our great state."

Readers from municipalities and other groups also give positive feedback for the *Uptown* magazine's guidance on local government issues. Bill Burr, the anchor for Charleston's Fox 24 News, sought information on the rules for prayer during a public meeting, which appear in an *Uptown* article, and noted that the magazine and the team behind it are excellent.

254 General Assembly bills tracked in the Association's Legislative Tracking System.

Among other municipal topics, these bills address Association Advocacy Initiatives, including protecting local authority to regulate short-term rentals, the ban on "squat trucks," and the push to allow cities with less revenue to complete a compilation of financial statements instead of a full audit.

461,330

visitors to
www.masc.sc

1.25 million

Total
page views

744

posts on
Twitter, Facebook
and Instagram feeds

110,000+

impressions

30,580

Twitter impressions
from Advocacy
Team

10,574

hits
on the Association's
podcasts

58 episodes

covering legislative action,
award-winning municipal projects,
civility in government, risk management,
business licensing and others.

1,900+

work hours building and launching
the new Association's website
www.masc.sc

Knowledge

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

Education and training improvements

One highlight of the last year came as the SC Municipal Finance Officers, Clerks and Treasurers Association hosted the International Institute of Municipal Clerks Region 3 meeting in February, including clerks from across the Southeast. The Association's Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government updated the videos used in its in-person and online training sessions, and the Association restructured its sponsor memberships, making it easier for sponsors to participate and support training events, keeping meeting registration fees lower.

MCAA 101, a relatively new program of the Municipal Court Administration, continued to acquaint new clerks of court with the basics of their jobs, with program participants saying that it helps them to not feel overwhelmed. The Association's Retail Recruitment Training, also fairly new, continued to help cities and towns draw in new businesses using marketing analyses and outreach efforts. Greenwood saw great success from its participation in the program, building ongoing relationships with developers and drawing in multiple retailers as the city reaches a pivotal point in its growth and development.

"Before this program, we were sometimes the last to know when a new retail business was considering our community for their next location," said Lara Hudson, Greenwood's community development director "Now, we are the first person they contact from day one and we can assist them from the start to opening day of their business."

Main Street South Carolina milestones

The downtown development technical assistance program Main Street South Carolina is marking its 40th year with numerous achievements, including the launch of WeShopSC, a statewide e-commerce marketplace focused on small businesses.

One of the state's Main Street communities, Downtown Florence, made national headlines by becoming the second South Carolina city to ever win the prestigious Great American Main Street Award, following its dramatic turnaround of a declining business district.

Florence's Development Director Hannah Davis described the accolade as "an unbelievable honor — it's the once-in-a-lifetime achievement representing the boundless investment, hard work, tenacity, and vision from local investors and partners, small business owners and residents, government officials and leaders, and our statewide Main Street network over the last 20 years."

Main Street SC also obtained a grant from the SC State Historic Preservation Office to help provide hands-on training for several cities with design review boards: Georgetown, Greenwood, Hartsville and Laurens. In Georgetown, Main Street Director Al Joseph said that the architecture review board members knew they would become more effective for their historic district community from the training.

"Our members came away very enthusiastic and appreciative of what they learned," Joseph said.

Field Services Managers assistance

The Association's field services managers help every single city and town with the major technical challenges that local officials face, using regular visits to the municipalities, training sessions and a personal touch. In the past year, much of this has involved American Rescue Plan Act funding and business license standardization. The team helped municipalities submit ARPA reports to the U.S. Department of the Treasury and keep them up to date on available state funds, such as those through the SC Infrastructure Investment Program of the SC Rural Infrastructure Authority.

After Field Services Manager Ashley Kellahan provided training for the Folly Beach board of zoning appeals, Toni Catoe, the board's chair, described the training as applicable for their work and effective.

"I personally gained so much information that increased my confidence in chairing and participating in the meetings in the future, and I heard other board members express the same sentiment," Catoe said.

860 total attendees

at the 2022 Municipal Association Annual Meeting, as well as 633 total attendees at the 2023 Hometown Legislative Action Day

823 total participants

for all sessions of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government, including in-person and online sessions, a 34% increase from the previous year

33 total Main Street South Carolina communities

participating at four levels, including Inman and Walterboro joining at the Aspiring level

194 municipalities

with at least one Municipal Elected Officials Institute graduate since the beginning of the MEO Institute, representing 72% of all municipalities

In 2022, Main Street SC's reinvestment statistics show:

- 469 new jobs created
 - \$179.5 million in private and public investment
 - 81 new businesses opened
 - 362 buildings rehabilitated
 - 24,906 volunteer hours
-

1,835 MEO Institute graduates Since 1986

and since 2016, there have been a total of 347 Advanced MEO Institute graduates

56 newly elected officials

have taken their first MEO Institute course in the last year

101 council training

sessions, meetings or strategic planning sessions led by the Association's field services managers for the year

27 graduates of MCAA 101

total since the course's launch

61 total participants

in the Association's Retail Recruitment Training program since 2021

4,665 total municipal contacts

made by the Association's field services managers, including 3,535 technical assistance contacts and 637 visits or networking contacts. This included 270 cities and towns out of the total 271. The most common type of technical assistance contacts included American Rescue Plan Act funds, business licensing, finance and human resources

Solutions

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

Business licensing standardization

The SC Business License Tax Standardization Act of 2020 created a great need for cities and towns to update the licensing practices that they use for this significant revenue source. Municipal Association staff worked diligently since before the law first took effect to help municipal staff with the many technical aspects of standardization, consolidating all efforts under its Local Revenue Services department and offering virtual business license training sessions every month beginning in 2022.

A key requirement of the new state law is the Local Business License Renewal Center, which all taxing jurisdictions must offer to businesses. License payments made through the online portal have increased substantially – from \$3.5 million in 2022 to \$10.8 million in the first part of 2023 alone. While some businesses expressed skepticism over the system initially, the efforts made by Local Revenue Services staff to educate and problem-solve with business licensing officials means that many businesses have reported the process to be working well and saving them significant time.

“The Local Business License Renewal Center was a breath of fresh air in the business license renewal season,” said Alten Driggers, supervisor of the Horry County Hospitality Fee and Business License Department, as well as president of the SC Business Licensing Officials Association. “The Renewal Center offers businesses an additional payment method, and is user-friendly for businesses, counties and cities to navigate.”

Loss control efforts

The programs of the Municipal Association’s Risk Management Services – the SC Municipal Insurance Trust and SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund – have always aimed to provide the greatest insurance value possible for cities and towns in ways that meet their specific needs. Its efforts continue to focus on personal customer service and cost reductions.

For SCMIRF, RMS has focused on identifying ways for members to reduce their costs – expanding data collection and identifying claims trends to address root causes, and then working closely with city staff through ongoing meetings and training sessions that address operational areas that have increased insurance costs. They provide frequent property appraisals, including diligent fieldwork, to make certain that everything is valued accurately.

RMS helped develop and shared the model law enforcement policies that help police departments meet the minimum standards now required under Act 218, the Law Enforcement Betterment Bill. RMS training offerings have included defensive driving training, hazard recognition training, the law enforcement Response to Resistance Simulator, other use-of-force training sessions, and verbal de-escalation training, among many others.

The SCMIT and SCMIRF staff place a great focus on the personal touch they can provide to members. Mike Woodall, senior SCMIT claims adjuster, described the process by saying, “day in and day out I work with our members, injured workers and medical providers to help provide benefits to injured workers. One cannot help but smile when an injured worker tells you ‘thank you’ at the end of their case.”

15,128 courses completed through **LocalGovU**, the online training portal for the Association's Risk Management Services

\$10.8 million in business license payments processed through the Local Business License Renewal Center in the first four months of 2023, compared to \$3.5 million processed throughout all of 2022

130 SC Municipal Insurance Trust members

135 SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund members, with the City of Westminster, Pickens Regional Joint Water System and Fairfield Joint Water & Sewer System joining as the newest members

291 member visits conducted by Risk Management Services for SCMIT and SCMIRF members, addressing police and fire consultations, scheduled annual reviews and assessments

\$300,000 in Hometown Economic Development Grant funds award to 12 cities and towns. Recipients:

- Bennettsville
- Bethune
- Blacksburg
- Bowman
- Cheraw
- Conway
- Landrum
- Pendleton
- Ridgeway
- Summerton
- Tega Cay
- Ware Shoals

74 member-specific training sessions hosted by Risk Management Services Loss Control

\$20 million+ in total purchases made through the City Connect Market, a cooperative purchasing partnership between HGACBuy and the Municipal Association launched in August 2021

19,942 employees and volunteers insured through SCMIT

\$393,000 grant funds disbursed through SCMIT and SCMIRF grants, and the programs have awarded a total of more than \$4.6 million to date

\$5.7 billion in total value insured through SCMIRF

15 consecutive years of the SC Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust receiving the Governmental Accounting Standards Board Award for Excellence for its financial report. SC ORBET is a trust that employers can join to pre-fund their future retirement benefit obligations

Internal Services

The internal services of the Association, such as technology, finance and human resources, play a critical role in providing support to the 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.

IT system improvements

A major IT change came in the last year for the Association's phone system, which had previously been an in-office Voice over Internet Protocol system. Staff has now moved to a cloud-based Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Teams system, enabling staff to answer phone calls from wherever they are working.

For well over a decade, the Association has conducted a disaster recovery exercise of its IT systems, and for most of that time, it staged the drill at a single off-site location. In 2022, employees conducted the exercise from multiple remote locations. In 2023, IT staff have reworked IP addresses at the Association's primary offices so that the exercise will not interfere with ordinary operations.

Municipal Association helpline

For city and town officials, accessing many of the Association's resources — offerings like meetings, training programs, listserves and others — requires the ability to log in to the Association's website. For times when technical issues arise, the Association maintains a helpline at 803.933.1297, which typically receives dozens of calls a month.

"Assisting people through the online help phone line is very rewarding because you see firsthand results of helping our members," said Virginia Butler, business systems analyst. "They are always appreciative and pleased to be able to get to the member-only content right away."

Safety improvements

The Municipal Association and its affiliate associations maintain automatic external defibrillator devices, at their meetings. As part of this safety precaution, the Association maintains ongoing AED and CPR training for its employees. The Association has also tackled another key danger in public places through active shooter training for its staff, using officers from the SC Law Enforcement Division.

Directory of Services

More than 90 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, knowledge and solutions**.

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 that enable local elected officials to address municipal challenges. 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 affect the state. *Staff Contacts: Casey Fields, Joannie Nickel, Scott Slatton, Erica Wright*

Regional Advocacy Meetings

Each fall, the Association hosts Regional Advocacy Meetings around the state to talk about the challenges facing cities and towns and how changes to state law could help them 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, emailed 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 *From the Dome to Your Home* 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 Contacts: Ken Ivey, Scott Slatton*

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*

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*

Municipal Association Mobile App

The Association app provides a mobile-friendly way to interact with the Association and connect to educational and legislative resources. Through the app, users can access the municipal directory, Association staff listing and municipal job openings, or view the calendar to see sessions and speakers at upcoming events. *Staff Contact: Russell Cox*

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 11 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*

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. Additionally, the Association offers MCAA 101, a three-part training on the basics of Court Administration. *Staff Contact: Sara Whitaker*

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 Whitaker*

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: Elizabeth Copeland*

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 Whitaker*

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: Elizabeth Copeland*

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 Whitaker*

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: Eric Shytle*

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: Elizabeth Copeland*

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 Society for Human Resources Management recognizes this training for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara Whitaker*

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 designated councils of governments' locations or online 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: Elizabeth Copeland*

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: Elizabeth Copeland*

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 three field services managers travel the state to offer hands-on technical assistance, training and consultation to help municipalities address challenges. *Staff Contacts: Charlie Barrineau, Ashley Kellahan and Naomi Reed*

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,TM which focuses on historic preservation and placemaking. Main Street SC provides member programs of varying levels of preparedness and resources with knowledge and tools to develop community-driven and comprehensive revitalization strategies. It provides on-site consultation and technical assistance to local programs that meet specific requirements. Quarterly workshops, networking sessions and on demand trainings also assist local Main Street programs in their efforts. At the startup level, members build capacity for downtown revitalization. At the Aspiring Main Street level, participants receive three years of technical assistance 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

- *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*
- *Tips for Hometown Media Success*

Staff Contact: Eric Budds

Website

The Municipal Association's website, www.masc.sc, offers more than 2,000 pages and 2,000 documents, presentations and links to external resources. 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*

Solutions

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

Local Revenue Services

The Municipal Association works with cities and towns to improve efficiencies by offering centralized local revenue services for certain business license taxes and delinquent debts. The Association provides an online portal to participating cities in the insurance, brokers and telecommunications tax programs as well as the Setoff Debt Program, that allows them to securely access current and past program documents.

Brokers Tax Program

Insurance companies not licensed to directly sell policies in the state can provide coverage through South Carolina licensed brokers. Businesses pay the municipal brokers premium tax to the SC Department of Insurance., which then remits funds to the Association to distribute to cities and towns.

Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Kaylee Summerton

Insurance Tax Program

The Association receives municipal business license tax payments from insurance companies and distributes the taxes owed to municipalities. The Insurance Tax Program consolidates the licensing procedures for insurance companies, saving time and money for municipalities and companies alike. Participating municipalities adopt a standard ordinance for these taxes.

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. *Staff Contacts: Fran Adcock, Caitlin Cothran, Anita Lancaster, Kaylee Summerton*

Local Business License Renewal Center

The Association developed a statewide online portal for business license renewals. The online portal is for renewals only. New business licenses will still be issued by the city or town. State law requires this system to be hosted by the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office. To use this free software, municipalities must adopt the standard business license practices.

Staff Contacts: Fran Adcock, Caitlin Cothran

Setoff Debt Program

The SC Department of Revenue receives payments for delinquent debts, such as utility bills, taxes and court fines, by reducing state income tax refunds by the amount of the debt. The department forwards the debt payments it receives to the Association, which in turn forwards the amounts to the reporting municipality or claimant agency. The Association provides software to all participating entities to streamline their program administration and ensure compliance with state regulations. *Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Anita Lancaster*

Telecommunications Tax Program

The Association centralizes the business license tax due to municipalities from telecommunication companies. Each December, the Association sends a notice to all telecommunications companies for the municipalities participating in the program. By law, municipalities can assess this tax only on the voice portion of a phone bill. The system 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, Kaylee Summerton*

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 the 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 general liability, law enforcement liability, public officials' liability, cyber 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 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, such as 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.

- SCMIRF awards the Law Enforcement Liability Reduction Grant Program grants to member law enforcement agencies to purchase stun guns or Tasers, Taser cameras, body cameras and other equipment.
- SCMIRF awards the Public Works Property and Liability Reduction Grant Program grants to member public works and utilities departments to purchase items to address the frequency and severity of claims, including back-up cameras, collision avoidance systems, concrete scarifiers, sewer cameras, meter locks and other 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 have a positive effect 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: Jake Broom*

City Connect Market

City Connect Market, a cooperative purchasing partnership between the Municipal Association of SC and HGACBuy, allows South Carolina’s cities and towns to take advantage of volume discounts when purchasing everything from fire trucks to roll carts to professional services. The partnership improves pricing and can help eliminate the need for each municipality to handle all details of each competitive bid process. *Staff Contact: Jake Broom*

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Pillars of Civility

Concentrate on what you have in common, not what separates you.

Be as eager to listen as to speak.

Your time is valuable. So is everyone else's. Respect it.

Act as you would expect someone to act in your home.

Concentrate on facts, not theories.

Ask questions to learn. Answer questions with respect.

Make your point about the issue, not the person.

Make your case on merits, not on what people want to hear.

Ask "what will persuade people in this room?" not "what will make a great tweet?"

Civility. Respect. Solutions.



Municipal Association
of South Carolina

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