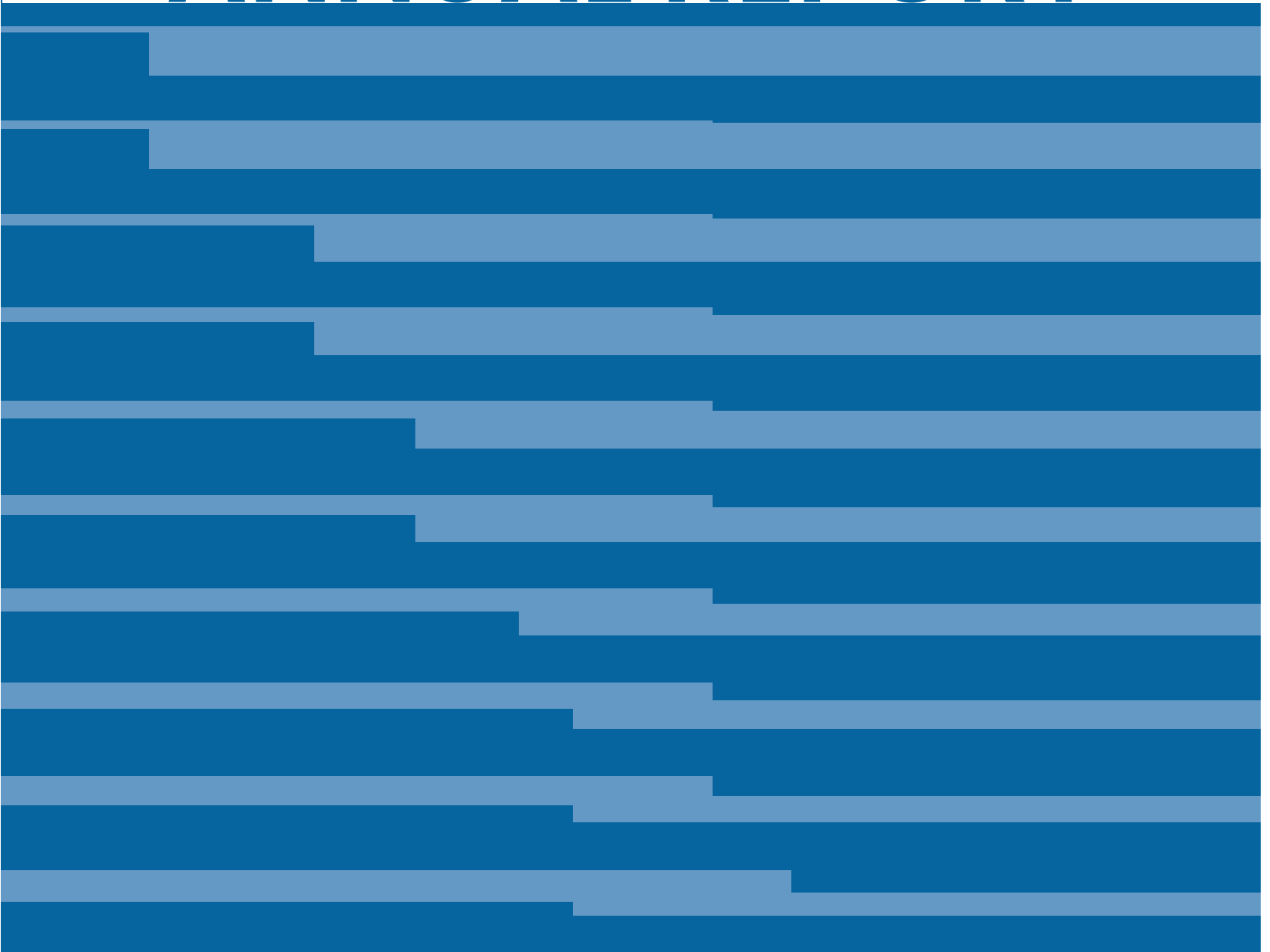




Municipal Association  
of South Carolina

# 2026 ANNUAL REPORT



## Every South Carolina city and town has a story.

There are stories of growth and opportunity. Others are stories of resilience in the face of challenges. Even some may be of struggle. All are stories of people working every day to improve the communities they call home.

**At the Municipal Association of South Carolina, we are privileged to be part of those stories.**

For more than eight decades, South Carolina's municipalities have joined together through the Association because they understood a simple truth: we are stronger when we work together. A shared voice carries farther. Shared knowledge creates stronger leaders. Shared solutions help communities overcome challenges that no city or town should have to face alone.

This annual report reflects that commitment in action.

Over the past year, municipal officials and staff across our state demonstrated extraordinary leadership. They advocated for their communities, invested in the next generation of local government leaders, revitalized downtowns, strengthened infrastructure, protected taxpayers, improved public safety and responded to challenges with innovation and determination.

Through our advocacy efforts, municipal voices were heard at both the State House and in Washington, D.C. Through education and training, hundreds of elected officials and municipal employees gained the knowledge needed to serve their communities more effectively. Through our programs and services, cities and towns found practical solutions that protected resources, reduced risk, expanded opportunities, and improved quality of life for residents.

The numbers in this report tell an impressive story, yet the true measure of success is not found in statistics alone. It is found in safer neighborhoods, stronger local economies, revitalized downtowns, improved public services and communities where residents feel connected and proud of where they live.

Thank you for your leadership, your partnership and your dedication to public service. Together, we continue to prove that local government remains the level of government closest to the people, and often the one that makes the greatest difference in their daily lives.

We are honored to serve you and proud of all we have accomplished together.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Todd Glover".

**B. Todd Glover**  
Executive Director







# Voices

Cities and towns created the Municipal Association of SC in part because officials knew collaboration would greatly amplify and strengthen their messages at the State House.

## Municipal surveys, fiscal impact statements

Cities need state lawmakers to understand when new laws could create new challenges or unintended consequences for local governments. The Association uses surveys from municipal officials and staff throughout the state as data-gathering tools to quantify and articulate the concerns faced by cities of every size. Legislators can request Fiscal Impact Statements through the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office to see how much of a financial burden a bill will place on governmental entities. In the 2026 session, the Association answered more than 85 requests for fiscal impact on legislation, and responded to individual legislative inquiries, presenting municipal perspectives with clarity and broad-based evidence.

In one survey example, water and sewer utilities responded to the Association's call for information with compelling stories on how septic tanks have damaged sensitive coastal ecosystems, up to the point of forcing the closure of oyster beds for harvesting. Armed with this data, the Association's advocacy team successfully opposed General Assembly proposals that would have undermined utility operations and damaged environmental health.

## Explaining legislation and municipal issues

The legislation that affects municipalities is often complex and fast-moving. The Association's advocacy team helps local officials make sense of it all through regular weekly updates, in the *From the Dome to Your Home* report and podcast, and through other online easy-to-read resources. For example, the SC Department of Transportation modernization bills, H5071 and S831, were of great interest to cities in 2026 because of their implications for municipal road ownership and funding. The Association provided an overview on its website of all 28 sections of the proposed law, describing how the roads would receive funding and how voluntary takeover of ownership would work — reprinted with permission from the SC Alliance to Fix Our Roads. The General Assembly ultimately passed S831.

Municipal annexation remains a critical but frequently misunderstood topic of legislative discussion. Many are unaware that the overwhelming majority of annexations in South Carolina use the 100% method, with property owners requesting the annexation. To explain how state law works, the Association launched the "Annexation in South Carolina" information hub at [l.masc.sc/AnnexInfoHub](http://l.masc.sc/AnnexInfoHub). It offers a one-page summary of annexation processes as well as a podcast and video series that explains the technical processes involved.

## Federal advocacy, SC/DC podcast

The Association's focus on federal advocacy continued in the last year, including a record five congressional briefings for municipal officials in 2025. These included briefings with Rep. Russell Fry in Conway, Rep. Nancy Mace in Charleston, Rep. Ralph Norman in Rock Hill, Rep. William Timmons in Greer and Rep. Joe Wilson in Cayce. Local officials found the opportunity to connect with their representatives valuable.

The Association's *City Quick Connect* podcast, which provides updates from the State House throughout the legislative session, also expanded with SC/DC, a series examining the Association's work with the congressional delegation. Podcast guests included Rep. William Timmons; Shay Hawkins, tax counsel for Sen. Tim Scott, explaining changes to Opportunity Zone law; and Washington-based members of the National League of Cities' advocacy team to discuss congressional funding and government shutdowns.

In a January 2026 episode, Rep. William Timmons of South Carolina's 4th District joined and thanked the Municipal Association for its ongoing communication with him on important issues.

"I need to be in touch with the people that I represent, and know what issues are important to them, know how the federal government needs to respond, and how we can change laws, or how we can be more efficient," he said. "So, I appreciate you taking time to keep me informed and up to date on the issues that are important to you."

**371,435 visitors** to [www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc), with **993,778 total page views**.

**870 social media posts** across Facebook, X and Instagram, garnering **255,542 impressions**.

**13,036 listens** for the Association's podcasts. Some topics covered:

- State and federal legislative action and calls to action for cities and towns
- Award-winning municipal projects
- Annexation
- Business licensing
- Election law
- Risk management topics like cybersecurity and auto loss reduction

**555 participants** at the Association's 2026 Hometown Legislative Action Day. Topics at the meeting included Congressionally Directed Spending, working with the SC Department of Transportation to strengthen infrastructure, and civility in local government discourse.

**484 bills tracked** in the Municipal Association's Legislative Tracking System, found at [www.masc.sc/legislative-tracking-system](http://www.masc.sc/legislative-tracking-system).

**More than 85 fiscal impact statements** submitted in four months for the 2026 legislative session.

The Association's *Uptown* magazine, which offers articles and feature stories on a wide variety of topics important to municipal officials, is distributed to **more than 5,000 recipients** each month. Some of the issues covered during this time include these:

- Building up safety-focused cultures
- Communications outreach
- Creative stormwater management solutions
- Cybersecurity best practices
- Downtown revitalization
- Establishing risk management plans
- Legal analysis
- Managing annexation, zoning and other land use decisions
- Recreation

# Knowledge

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

## ***All About Local Government in South Carolina! activity books***

Municipal success requires civic education, which can promote an informed electorate, candidates for elected office and job applicants. Aiming to plant the seeds of civic engagement at an early age, the Association developed an activity book for second grade students and has been distributing 60,000 of them to schools statewide — enough for every second grader. The book covers the role of elected officials, municipal elections, municipal services and civility in government.

## **Build the Bench, Summer Enrichment Academy**

Responding to South Carolina's shortage of well-qualified city management candidates, the Association partnered with the Master of Public Administration programs at the College of Charleston and University of South Carolina to create the Build the Bench program, placing interns with municipalities to familiarize students with real-life municipal work and build a diverse pool of future job candidates. The program has placed recent interns with Goose Creek, West Columbia, Greer and the Municipal Association itself.

USC student Kirsten Miller interned at the Municipal Association and worked with many of its departments. She said the experience made her interested in a career as a city administrator.

"The people within this organization have shown me how I can make a lasting impact during my lifetime by working in this field," Miller said. "Local government is a field I never really knew existed until I became an intern, and I plan to keep exploring it throughout the remainder of my college career."

In 2026, the College of Charleston announced the renaming of the MPA programs' Summer Enrichment Academy in honor of former Municipal Association Deputy Executive Director — and College of Charleston MPA graduate — Eric Budds, recently retired from a 40-year career in local government. The program guides students on graduate education for public service careers, including site visits and networking with local governments and nonprofits.

## **Main Street South Carolina**

Main Street SC, the Association's downtown revitalization and technical assistance program, continued expanding statewide support for small businesses and historic downtowns through training and programming. In 2025, Main Street SC received a StimulateSC grant from the SC Department of Commerce to launch a statewide Small Business Photo Sprint and Story series, helping communities and businesses strengthen their digital presence and ability to share stories through tourism campaigns, websites, social media, and downtown marketing efforts. It ultimately involved photographing 112 small businesses, producing 10,431 professional images and training 176 participants.

"In both casual conversations and interviews, I heard a repeating theme: 'I was looking for something, and I found it in South Carolina.'" said Phil Eich, photographer and project partner. "Whether it was someone returning to their hometown to start a family, exchanging the metropolitan bustle for a small-town quality of life, or someone jumping from state to state, the theme that South Carolina has what people are looking for was a common one."

South Carolina also gained national recognition in 2025 as the host state for Main Street America's Community Transformation Workshop, taking place in Hartsville. It brought 50 downtown revitalization professionals from across the country to study transformation strategies, community engagement, market analysis and preservation-based economic development. Another partnership with Main Street America created the Small-scale Producer Growth Accelerator, providing hands-on support for entrepreneurs, including coaching and peer learning as they improve their operations, reach more customers and contribute to local economies.

**683 officials** attended the Municipal Association's 2025 Annual Meeting, and **105 officials** attended the 2025 Small Cities Summit.

**2,069 total attendees** participated in **30 events** hosted by the Municipal Association's affiliate associations. Among attendees were **1,255 municipal employees**, representing **172 cities and towns**, that attended at least one affiliate meeting.

The Municipal Court Administration Association of SC launched a mentorship program connecting veterans of the field with those developing their careers. The first round includes **five mentors** and **six mentees**.

**101 elected officials** graduated from the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government, and **47 officials** graduated from the Advanced MEO Institute.

**1,990 MEO Institute participants** have graduated since 1986, when the program began, and **418 Advanced MEO Institute** participants have graduated since that program began in 2014.

**123 elected officials** completed their first Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government course in the past year.

**200 municipalities of the total 271** now have had at least one MEO graduate. The Town of Jefferson is the newest municipality to gain an MEO graduate.

**458 unique users** used the Association's on-demand learning portal, which houses training from the MEO Institute, Planning and Zoning Training and Risk Management Services trainings.

**32 total Main Street SC communities** participating at four levels, including Aiken, Florence, Greenwood, Hartsville and Laurens as the five nationally accredited Main Street SC cities.

**85 attendees** at the Association's first-ever Risk Management Services Conference in August 2025. Some of sessions that were the most highly reviewed by participants covered reducing the risks of distracted driving, handling sovereign citizens and First Amendment auditors, and changing weather patterns in South Carolina.

**770 businesses participating** in WeShopSC, the statewide e-commerce marketplace created by the Municipal Association of South Carolina and Main Street SC to advance small business storefront technology, training and marketing support.

Since 1983, designated Main Street communities in SC have collectively recorded **more than \$1.16 billion in investment**, **1,580 new businesses** and **more than 7,300 jobs**.

**2,448 technical assistance requests** handled by the Association's Field Services managers, assisting municipal clerks, administrators and managers, as well as elected officials, both existing and newly elected. There were **3,742 total municipal contacts** made by the team in **269 cities and towns**.

## Top 10 Requests for Technical Assistance

1. **Networking/general discussion**
2. **Finance/budgets/audits/Local Government Fund reports**
3. **Education and training**
4. **Planning and zoning**
5. **American Rescue Plan Act funding and reporting**
6. **Human resources**
7. **Business licensing**
8. **SC Freedom of Information Act**
9. **Council conflict and civility**
10. **Elections**

# Solutions

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

## Risk Management Services

After Hurricane Helene caused significant destruction in South Carolina in September 2024, members of the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund and the SC Municipal Insurance Trust faced storm-related losses totaling \$5,255,492. RMS staff worked with member municipalities in the processing of more than 500 claims, often involving significant legal and coverage-related complexities, closing 98% of them by May 2026.

In one valuable example of RMS assistance, the staff works with SCMIRF members to help identify special events activities not fully covered by their policies, and can help them secure a special events policy – protecting them while helping them host the festivals and events that bring communities together.

## Launch of IMPACT Fund

In 2016, the Municipal Association launched the Hometown Economic Development grants to support local projects. In 2025, that program became the IMPACT Fund, an acronym for “Innovative Municipal Projects for Advancing Change and Transformation,” giving cities more flexibility and funding opportunities. It is supported by the Association’s strategic partner for technology services, VC3. Within it, the Big Idea Grant provides two recipients with \$100,000 each for creative, forward-thinking initiatives. The Problem Solver Grant, meanwhile, gives eight recipients \$25,000 each for routine projects like playground upgrades or facility repairs.

2025 Big Idea Grant recipients included Greenville, which would transform the Nicholtown Community Center into the state’s first Resiliency Hub. North Augusta used Big Idea Grant funds to place 50 automated external defibrillators with CPR-trained volunteers, enabling them to help with cardiac arrest events before first responders arrive.

“As a city, we often talk about providing a great quality of life for our citizens,” North Augusta Mayor Briton Williams said. “By placing AEDs throughout the city and empowering residents to assist those in need, we are truly enhancing quality of life in a way never before seen in North Augusta.”

## Palmetto Power Cities

A group with a 52-year history, PPC made major advancements in the past year, beginning with its rebranding from its previous name, the SC Association of Municipal Power Systems to Palmetto Power Cities. A strategic change driven by a commitment to strengthen visibility, communications, representation and member support. PPC provides technical assistance for utility policies, system improvements, customer service and legislative advocacy. Some of their recent activities included Senate subcommittee testimony on data centers, legislative receptions at the U.S. Capitol along with the South Carolina State House, a Lineworker Rodeo and Safety Training day, and tour of the generation plant at the J. Strom Thurmond Dam.

## Field Services assistance

The Association’s Field Services managers assist every city and town in the state through regular visits, consultations and trainings – a valuable resource, especially when new councilmembers join council. They offer orientation for newly elected officials, training in the roles and responsibilities of local government and facilitate goal-setting sessions.

In Cordova, part of Field Services Manager’s Desirée Fragoso’s territory, Town Clerk Martha Giacomarro said that Fragoso had helped officials and staff throughout multiple transitions, and with topics like the town’s comprehensive plan.



**138 SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund members.**

**132 SC Municipal Insurance Trust members.**

**21,731 employees and volunteers insured** through SCMIT.

**\$7.16 billion in total value insured** through SCMIRF.

**73 member-specific training sessions** hosted by Risk Management Services Loss Control. Trainings include defensive driving — addressing distracted driving, which is a significant cause of accidents — as well as Occupational Safety and Health Administration Confined Space Competent Person Training and public safety training.

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

**\$2 million** in surplus returned to eligible SCMIT members.

**16,927 courses completed** through LocalGovU, the online training portal of the Association's Risk Management Services.

**\$402,762 in grant funds disbursed** through SCMIT and SCMIRF grants.

**More than \$7.7 million collected** in subrogation and other recoveries on behalf of SCMIT and SCMIRF members.

**\$45.8 million in business license payments processed** through the Local Business License Renewal Center in the first four months of 2026, compared to 37.2 million in all of 2025, \$23.8 million in 2024 and \$11.9 million processed in 2023.

**30,330 business licenses renewed** through the LBLRC in the first four months of 2026, compared to 26,585 processed in all of 2025 and 19,063 processed in 2024.

The Association's Local Revenue Services worked with **270 municipalities** as well as **nine counties** and **40,434 businesses** to audit taxable income.

**\$30.23 million in purchases** made during calendar year 2026 through the City Connect Market, a cooperative purchasing partnership between the Municipal Association and HGACBuy, with the CarolinaBUY Cooperative added as a new partner in 2026. This brings the total purchases made since the program started in 2021 to **\$98.09 million**.

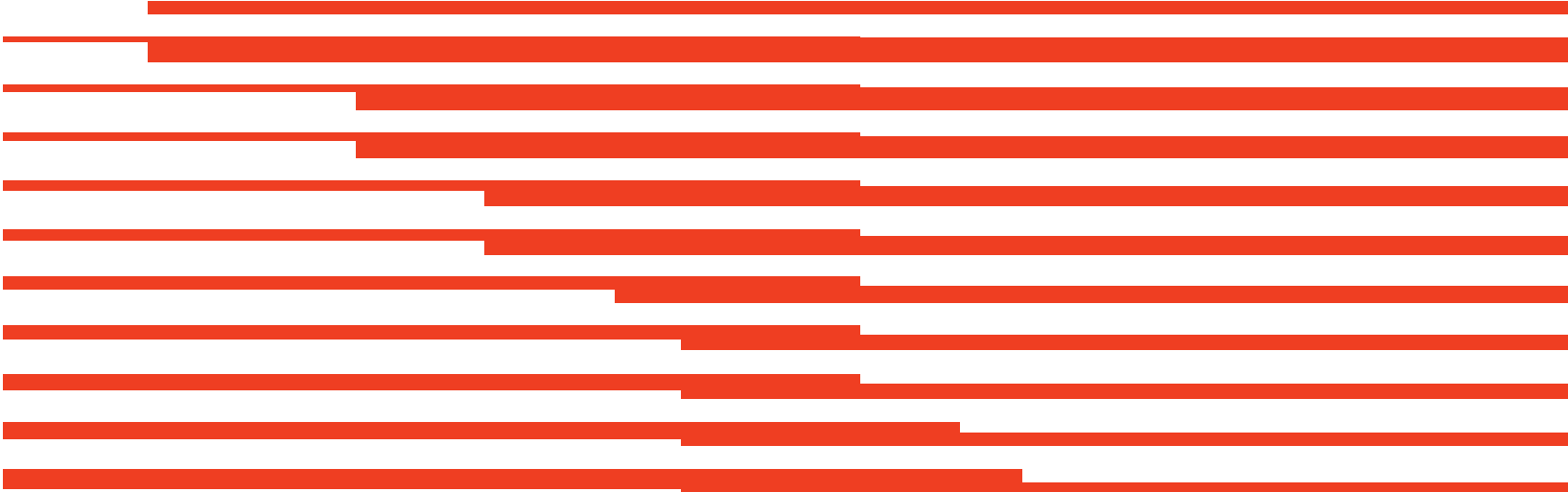
**\$400,000 in IMPACT funds** awarded to 10 cities and towns.

**Big Idea Grant recipients** (\$100,000 each):

- City of Greenville
- City of North Augusta

**Problem Solver Grant recipients** (\$25,000 each):

- Town of Campobello
- City of Chesnee
- Town of Heath Springs
- City of Manning
- Town of Pacolet
- Town of Pageland
- Town of Ruby
- Town of Salley



# Internal Services

**The internal services of the Municipal Association — technology, finance and human resources — play a critical role in supporting staff so the organization can deliver valuable and efficient services to South Carolina’s cities and towns.**

## IT upgrades

The Association made numerous IT system upgrades in the past year. From a security and resiliency standpoint, the IT department implemented a new syslog server, which monitors the Association’s networking and infrastructure equipment, completed two business continuity disaster recovery tests, and decommissioned the legacy Trades program hosted on a Windows 2012 server. For the computing equipment used by Association staff, the IT department refreshed many of their laptops and mobile devices, and upgraded the remote access environment which enables staff to work and communicate while outside the office. This helps the staff better serve elected officials and municipal employees around the state, especially for those whose work frequently takes them out of the office — Field Services managers, Loss Control staff, and Education and Training staff who assist with conferences and meetings.

## Loss Control and AI insights

Risk Management Services claims staff, as well as the Loss Control division, which helps RMS members build effective safety and loss control programs, has recently begun leveraging Domo, an artificial intelligence data analytics platform, to improve risk management strategies. The total body of information created through losses and insurance claims can be fragmented and complex, but AI analytics helps RMS staff generate reports as well as identify trends and opportunities for improvement — protecting cities and towns, and keeping insurance costs down.

## Transition of Mechanical Trades Certification Program

The Municipal Association had operated its Mechanical Trades Certification Program since 1965, issuing journeyman and master certifications in such mechanical trades as electrical, gas, plumbing and heating, ventilation and air conditioning work. At the time the program was created, South Carolina generally did not require state licensing in these areas, and so this helped assure municipalities hired qualified professionals in those fields.

In more recent decades, state licensing requirements in these fields have become more stringent, causing fewer municipalities to rely on the program. In 2025, after studying the issue, the Association helped the program adapt to the current professional environment by transitioning its management to Carolinas AGC, a construction trade association for contractors and related firms in both of the Carolinas. The change took effect in January 2026.





# Directory of Services

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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 that cities and towns can carry out more efficiently and effectively when they work together through the Association, than they could 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 collaborating 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, Webster Hall, Daina Phillips, Erica Wright*

#### 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*

### 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 X (@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*

### **Research and Analysis**

The Association conducts quantitative and qualitative research and compiles reports on topics related to municipal governance, operations and legislative issues affecting cities and towns. While this research activity primarily supports the work of the Association, it is also available to member cities and towns as they seek to develop new policies and positions on issues. *Staff Contact: Mary Catherine Lawton*

## **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: Lea Ann Mitchell*

### **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: Lea Ann Mitchell*

### **Palmetto Power Cities**

For years, municipal electric utility members have worked together as the South Carolina Association of Municipal Power Systems. With a continued focus on providing mutual aid, advocacy efforts, education and shared expertise, the organization is now Palmetto Power Cities. Twenty one of the municipal electric utilities are members of the organization. *Staff Contact: Adam Hedden*



## **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: Lea Ann Mitchell*

## **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: Lea Ann Mitchell*

## **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: Sara Whitaker*

## **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 winter 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, Desirée Fragoso, Rob Wolfe*

#### **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,<sup>TM</sup> 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)
  - *South Carolina Business Licensing Handbook*
  - *Tips for Hometown Media Success*
- Staff Contact: Jake Broom*

## Website

The Municipal Association's website, [www.masc.sc](http://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 and The Uplift

*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. *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, Rochelle Smith, 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, Rochelle Smith*

### **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, Rochelle Smith, 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: Naomi Reed*

### **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: Naomi Reed*

## IMPACT Fund

After years of the Municipal Association of SC supporting local economic development initiatives through the Hometown Economic Development Grant program, a new and expanded grant program is taking its place — one updated to reflect the continuously evolving needs and ambitions of communities across the state. The Association introduced the IMPACT Fund, an acronym for "Innovative Municipal Projects for Advancing Change and Transformation." This newly structured program empowers municipalities with greater flexibility, increased funding opportunities and a renewed focus on innovation and problem-solving. *Staff Contact: Sara Whitaker*

## 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: Summer Randall*

## City Connect Market

City Connect Market, a cooperative purchasing partnership between the Municipal Association of SC, HGACBuy and CarolinaBuy, 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 partnerships improve 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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