

2022

Civility Makes
the Difference

Annual Report

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

Just as we've finally emerged from the two-year fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, government leaders across the country are facing down another outbreak: incivility in government.

We have entered an era where threatening, mocking, deriding and dismissing are the norm. Gone are the days when ideas were at least respected even when they were not heeded. Compromise and collaboration are treated as four-letter words, and pithy insults are more celebrated than thoughtful solutions.

As leaders of local government, you have seen and experienced this rapid decline. It has come from residents, anonymous online trolls, and even from colleagues at times.

Local governments innovate. They solve problems. They act. That's why I'm hopeful that local governments can lead the way in repairing our broken discourse. Together, we can chart a course back to governing without malice. We can return to the days of having disagreements without being disagreeable.

Last year, the Association's board of directors adopted a strategic plan that included restoring civility in government as a top priority. Leadership on this issue is something we take very seriously. Collectively, we can get the political discussion in our state back on track.

The English poet Lady Mary Montagu once wrote that civility "costs nothing and buys everything."

She was right.

When you're disagreeing with a colleague on council or a resident on Facebook, civility makes the difference. It's the difference between conversation and controversy, between a friendship and a falling out.

You'll be hearing about civility much more from the Association in the coming year at our events and in our publications. By offering speakers, workshops and tools to help local government leaders listen, learn and de-escalate heated situations, our local leaders can be the example of how to govern best.

South Carolina's cities and towns led the way during the last pandemic, and I know we'll handle this one just as well.

Please take the opportunity to look through this report to see the hard work that the gifted staff of the Association accomplished in the past year. We are honored to work for you and with you as you lead the incredible cities and towns of our state.



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

B. Todd Glover
Municipal Association of SC
Executive Director

Finding Common Ground: The Pillars of Civility

After the Municipal Association's board of directors identified promoting civility as one of its key initiatives, the Association developed a list of key ideas for elected officials and staff to use when making local government as effective, inclusive and courteous as possible.

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.



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.

American Rescue Plan funding advocacy

In 2021, Congress passed the American Rescue Plan, a \$1.9-trillion pandemic relief bill that provided \$65.1 billion to municipal governments nationwide. In South Carolina, the smaller municipalities, known as nonentitlement units of local government for ARP purposes, had to wait for the state to request ARP funds be distributed to them. The transformative projects these cities and towns wanted to pursue continued to grow more expensive and difficult during the months-long delay between the funds' availability and their distribution. The Municipal Association became part of a team that appealed to the governor's office to draw down these funds, working with the SC Rural Infrastructure Authority, the SC Department of Administration, and the accelerateSC pandemic advisory team. The Association also worked with the General Assembly to ensure that all cities and towns would have fair access to the state's ARP funding for infrastructure.

The rules governing how cities could spend their ARP dollars are complex, and the Association has employed Legislative and Public Policy Advocate Erica Wright to learn everything possible about ARP funding. The Association has provided clarifications on the guidance material coming from the U.S. Department of the Treasury and it has served as a local resource for cities and towns across the state.

The City of Orangeburg decided to use its ARP funding for impactful purposes including public safety enhancements, affordable housing, grants for nonprofits and premium pay for employees. City Administrator Sidney Evering said the city was grateful for the Association's guidance efforts.

"Erica served as an invaluable resource, especially during the period when ARP guidelines were being established and refined," he said. "We could always count on the Municipal Association to provide us with the latest updates, not only regarding the guidelines, but also planned fund uses by peer cities and towns."

Federal advocacy engagement

In addition to the legislative wins at the State House — for example, the passage of H3050, the law enforcement "betterment" bill that established several policing reforms — the Association also expanded upon its growing relationships with the Congressional delegation. Meetings in Washington in January connected Aiken Mayor Rick Osbon, first vice president of the Association; as well as Association staff leadership with Sen. Tim Scott, Reps. Jim Clyburn and Joe Wilson, and also staffers from other members' offices.

So far, the Association has hosted Congressional briefings to better connect city and town leaders with Nancy Mace of the 1st District and Tom Rice of the 7th District. Rice described his briefing session in Myrtle Beach as a valuable "opportunity to answer questions from the incredible local municipal leaders who serve our community so well."

New Municipal Association app

The Association previously offered single-use event apps for major conferences, but in 2022 it launched an app to give users a mobile-friendly way to connect to all of its educational, legislative and support resources. The app is now delivering content to members on the devices they use every day, with material ranging from the Association's training calendar, municipal directory, staff listing, municipal job openings, podcasts and articles.

The app still connects conference attendees with what they need to know about the Annual Meeting or Hometown Legislative Action Day. Users can read about each meeting session and learn more about speakers, sponsors and fellow attendees.



446

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

15,352 listens

to the City Quick Connect podcast, more than
doubling the streams from the previous year



424,737 total visits

to www.masc.sc, with a total

1.1 million page views

A 5-part video series

explained council meeting executive session
issues during Sunshine Week in March



2,000+ engagements

on 680+ posts on the Association's Twitter,
Facebook and Instagram accounts



Knowledge

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

On-demand training

The Association began using a learning management system for the online, on-demand sessions of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government and the Planning and Zoning Orientation Training. The new system provides a user-friendly way for participants to keep track of their course progress and registrations. The Association's Risk Management Services is now moving its training institute to the same platform.

Field services outreach

The Association's field services managers expanded their numbers in 2022, allowing them to give more attention to each municipality. Ashley Kellahan joined the team of Charlie Barrineau and Jeff Shacker as the Association's third field services manager. The team is available to South Carolina's cities and towns to assist local officials with addressing significant challenges, including the large numbers of questions during the past year about proper handling of American Rescue Plan funding and business licensing standardization. Beyond answering questions, the field services managers regularly attend city and town council meetings and conduct training sessions and goal-setting workshops.

Retail Recruitment Training

In 2021, the Municipal Association began training sessions to help cities and towns develop professional recruitment strategies using marketing analyses, recruitment packets and personal outreach efforts at trade shows and other events. Two rounds of the six-session course have completed, which included the City of West Columbia among 25 other municipalities.

City Administrator Brian Carter and other West Columbia officials attended. He described the materials and presentation as impressive and valuable, and said his staff is now confident in its ability to recruit retailers.

"Using the lessons we learned and the materials we created during our training, my team developed a strategic approach for meeting with various retailers and successfully developed over 40 leads. We are already seeing some of those leads turn into new business in West Columbia," Carter said.

MCAA 101

The Municipal Court Administration Association of SC's 101 training, launched shortly before the pandemic, completed its first full cycle, and so far, 52 participants have taken at least one of the sessions. The training was the brainchild of Pam Larson, Clerk of Court for the City of Greenville Municipal Court. She conceived of the training to help the many inexperienced court administrators with the basics of the job, and to help seasoned administrators refresh their understanding of the legal requirements.

Main Street South Carolina

In 2019, the Association's downtown development technical assistance program, Main Street South Carolina, established four levels for participating communities — Accredited, Aspiring, Classic and Friends — to provide better assistance tailored to each community's needs and readiness. Today, there are 31 communities across all levels.

Main Street Walhalla is at the Aspiring level, where communities participate in training, community assessment and receive local-capacity-building support. Libby Imbody is the director of Main Street Walhalla. "In just two short years we have gone from a drive-through town to truly the 'Main Street to the Mountains.' We have very [few downtown] vacancies, have opened over 20 new businesses, and can boast a \$26-to-\$1 return on public investment," Imbody said.

613 total participants for all sessions of the Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government, including in-person and online sessions.

194 municipalities with at least one Municipal Elected Officials Institute graduate, representing **72%** of all municipalities.

Since 1986, there have been a total of **1,783 MEO graduates**, and since 2016, there have been a total of **284 Advanced MEO graduates**.

26 municipalities represented at the Association's two cycles of Retail Recruitment Training.

3,198 municipal contacts made by the Association's field services managers after they began using a trackable reporting system in September 2021. This included 260 cities and towns out of the total 271.

3,084 technical assistance requests made by municipalities after the reporting system started. The largest category of requests was American Rescue Plan questions — **648 questions** —and the second largest was business licensing — **330 questions**.

65 council training sessions led by the field services managers for the year.

26 goal-setting sessions led by the field services managers for the year.

In 2021, Main Street SC's reinvestment statistics show:

- **702 new jobs** created
- **\$76 million** in private and public investment
- **183 new businesses** opened
- **287 buildings** rehabilitated
- **112 completed construction projects**
- **13,906 volunteer hours** contributed



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 process

In 2020, the General Assembly passed the SC Business License Tax Standardization Act, or Act 176, which established a standardized process for business license administration across the state. A major win for business-friendly practices in the state, it also created numerous challenges for the 231 municipalities and nine counties with business licenses to standardize their practices for this significant revenue source.

With most of the law's provisions going into effect in 2022, cities and towns worked hard on compliance with the Municipal Association throughout 2021. In total, Association staff helped 223 municipalities and counties rebalance their business license rates to comply with the law's revenue neutrality requirement.

Education was a major component of the standardization effort as well. The Association's Local Revenue Services department held in-person and virtual training sessions on business licensing for licensing officials. The Association's General Counsel Eric Shytle rewrote the highly detailed SC Business License Handbook to reflect the requirements of Act 176.

An important change required by the law is the creation of the Local Business License Renewal Center. The online business license renewal center launched in 2022 and it allows businesses to renew their business licenses for every city, town and county in the state. In the Renewal Center's first renewal cycle, 120 taxing jurisdictions used the new system, 5,040 business license renewals were submitted through it, and about \$3.1 million in business license taxes passed to the jurisdictions through the system.

The launch of the Renewal Center brought positive reviews from businesses and licensing officials for its ease of use and its ability to save time for everyone. Teresa Eaton, licensing, permitting and court manager for the City of Florence, described the Association's Local Revenue Services as diligent in bringing officials around the state on board with the Renewal Center.

"I want to thank the Municipal Association for putting the time, energy and financing into making the Renewal Center happen. VC3 [the Association's technology partner] has done an excellent job of building and tweaking it to make it user-friendly for customers and municipalities," she said.

City Connect Market

The Association introduced the City Connect Market in 2021, a cooperative purchasing partnership with HGACBuy, which allows South Carolina cities and towns to take advantage of volume discounts on their purchases, and eliminate the need for each municipality to handle every competitive bid process independently. The program helps with purchasing in 41 major categories of products — which can cover everything from fire trucks to ambulances, public works equipment, police officer body cameras and playground equipment — as well as with services, all offered by more than 800 contractors.

Cyber insurance policies

Municipal governments are significantly vulnerable to cyber attacks, which can be very costly and are becoming more difficult to insure. Cyber insurance policies are critical for the financial protection of cities and towns. When the Association's SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund received short notice that its existing cyber insurance carrier would not renew coverage, SCMIRF moved rapidly to find a new carrier and maintain this critical protection for members.

223 cities and counties received assistance with business license rebalancing.

5,040 business license renewals for 120 taxing jurisdictions submitted through the Local Business License Renewal Center.

130 SC Municipal Insurance Trust members, including the Town of Olar joining as a new member.

18,996 employees and volunteers insured through SCMIT.

132 SCMIRF members, with the Town of Olar and City of Hanahan joining as new members.

\$4.7 million of total value insured through SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund.

10,766 courses completed through LocalGovU, the online training portal for the Association's Risk Management Services.

\$450,000 grant funds available through SCMIT and SCMIRF grants. The programs have awarded a total of more than **\$4.4 million** to date.

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

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

17 purchases made through the City Connect Market in its first year, totaling **\$8.8 million**. Purchases include 11 fire trucks, 440 police body cameras and 300 sanitation roll carts, among others.

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

Recipients:

- Beaufort
- Cayce
- Donalds
- Georgetown
- Greeleyville
- Honea Path
- Moncks Corner
- Pacolet
- Pelion
- Seabrook Island
- Society Hill
- Westminster



Internal Services

The internal services of the Association, such as technology, finance and human resources, serve 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.

Enhancement of IT systems

The Association often works to make its operations function as a model for certain city and town operations, including through its investments in its IT infrastructure and building maintenance. In the past year, the Association upgraded many of its systems and equipment to improve cybersecurity and to make virtual meetings and hybrid meetings more feasible. This includes the installation of cameras, microphones and monitors in conference spaces.

The Association also implemented multi-factor authentication for its digital network, which requires multiple steps to authenticate a sign-in, for example, requiring entry of a text message code when changing a password.

In previous years, the Association would perform its annual IT disaster recovery exercise at a single off-site location. For the first time last year, staff performed the exercise remotely from multiple locations.

Risk Management Services claims efficiency

The SC Municipal Insurance Trust and SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund now each have their own claims manager, which helps both programs receive the attention they need for every case. The new structure also allows the claims managers to focus on their own specialties in the constantly changing world of government liability and workers' compensation.

Risk Management Services also worked with software partners to upgrade the document management and workflow processing tool used by the claims department. The program improves document access and creates email integration for invoice processing and document management.

New studio space

From instructional videos to conference sessions to *City Quick Connect* podcast episodes, the Association often records audiovisual material, but lacked a dedicated space to do so. Beginning in 2022, the Association has a permanent recording space to make production faster and more efficient.

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 10 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 *City Quick Connect* podcast during the legislative session.

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

Hometown Legislative Action Day

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

Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC helps its members revitalize their downtowns into vibrant centers of commerce and community by using the National Main Street Center's Main Street Approach,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. 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; 2,000 documents, presentations and links to external resources; and more than 600 in-state municipal job postings. With a responsive design to fit the needs and formats of mobile and desktop devices, the site includes a powerful search engine and information center to help users navigate to specific resources of interest. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

Uptown

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

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



Daily News

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

The Uplift

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

Achievement Awards

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

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. It 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 contract streamlines the payment process for telecommunications companies. It also saves cities and towns time and money by eliminating the need for each to perform the same processes. *Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, 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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