



Municipal Association
of South Carolina™

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



I'm pleased to present to you the Municipal Association's 2024 Annual Report. This year, our Association, representing the interests of South Carolina's cities and towns, has again made significant strides in advocacy as well as training and services for local elected officials and staff.

When we discuss the Association's accomplishments, we are always quick to acknowledge that collaboration with you is what makes it possible. The dedication of our elected and local officials, their willingness to partner with stakeholders, and an understanding that we can achieve more together than separately, are instrumental in our success.

Throughout the year, we focused on strengthening our local communities by defending your ability to govern your cities and towns at the local level, promoting sustainable development, enhancing public services and fostering economic growth. We have focused on many initiatives this year – civility in local government, city management succession planning and retail assistance programs – to name just a few.

This report overviews our recent successes, but it sets the stage for our future endeavors as well. We will continue to work together to advocate for policies that benefit our hometowns, invest in innovative solutions, and help build stronger, more resilient communities. Thank you for your commitment and contributions to our shared mission.



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

B. Todd Glover
Municipal Association of SC
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.

Advocacy efforts

The Association's advocacy team helped secure the passage of Act 57, allowing municipalities to use state and local accommodations taxes to develop workforce housing. In another legislative success, the General Assembly passed Act 71, which allows municipalities with less than \$500,000 in recurring revenues to provide a compilation of financial statements rather than a full audit. This new law offers a more cost-effective option for many small towns. For the second year, the advocacy team prevented a state budget proviso that would bar municipalities from regulating short-term rentals in their communities.

The Association also worked to create an online resource for municipalities who sought to pass a hate crimes ordinance due to the lack of a statewide hate crimes law. For example, North Charleston passed their local ordinance because the city "must protect its residents from intimidation based on bias or hate towards a person because of the actual or perceived ethnicity, national origin, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender and gender identity or physical or mental disability."

Research expansion

The Association's efforts to be a source of critical South Carolina-specific municipal information to officials – as well as the General Assembly and state agencies – received a substantial boost in 2023 with the hire of a research and legislative analyst. Some of the data already collected included fiscal impact statements and other documents related to short-term rentals, annexation and other critical topics used by municipalities, Association staff and the SC Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs.

"RFA appreciates the cooperation and assistance from [the Municipal Association] on the many fiscal and legislative issues that our office is required to provide analysis on for the legislature and other offices," RFA staff said in a statement. "Having a dedicated person who understands the many details of the issues and can help us identify or understand the complete picture is especially helpful."

The Association's research involves many other valuable topics: short-term rental regulation around the state, acceptance of surety bonds, 911 communicator training, fire department personnel training and turnover, tax collection methodologies, and political sign regulations, among others.

Civility in local government

In 2022, the Association launched an initiative to restore civility in local government, providing local leaders with training, civility pledges and other resources. The effort to help officials listen, learn and work through conflicts struck a chord, not only with city councils, but also with other governmental entities in South Carolina and across the nation. The Association joined with the SC School Boards Association for a joint civility initiative partnership in 2023.

The two organizations came together to host a joint training with retired police chief Harry Dolan on deescalating volatile or heated situations. A key to the process, Dolan said, is the ability to listen to someone express why they are upset, give them adequate time to express their feelings, and demonstrate that you understand their concerns.

"The most powerful word in the English language, in my opinion, is empathy – to be able to see the world through someone else's eyes," he said.

The Association's sample civility resolution, as well as a variety of other resources including the civility pledge adopted by numerous councils, can be found at www.masc.sc (keyword: civility).

> 414 General Assembly bills tracked in the Association's Legislative Tracking System.

Among other municipal topics, these bills address Association Advocacy Initiatives, including protecting local authority to regulate short-term rentals and supporting statewide hate crimes legislation.

> 484 posts on the Municipal Association's Facebook, X and Instagram feeds, with 82,980 impressions.

For legislative advocacy material, including posts from the Association's advocacy team, the count is 169 posts and 11,441 impressions.

> 10,617 hits on the Association's podcasts

58 episodes covering legislative action, award-winning municipal projects, Municipal Association conferences and civility in government.

> 281,911 visitors to www.masc.sc

> 782,558 total page views



Knowledge

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

Education and training improvements

A great challenge for training and professional development among municipal elected officials and staff is the turnover often experienced in these positions. The Association continues to find new ways to connect officials and staff with the knowledge they need to do their jobs well.

A recent example includes the Association's first-ever Small Cities Summit which offered targeted educational sessions for municipalities with populations of fewer than 3,000 residents. The Association's Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government updated several of its on-demand courses in 2023. Also, the downtown revitalization technical assistance program Main Street South Carolina expanded its staff with a new staff associate and launched online training for design review board members.

The SC Business License Officials Association is one of 11 affiliate associations of the Municipal Association that provide job-specific training. In the case of BLOA, it provides regular training for administering local business and professional license taxes, and offers an Accreditation in Business Licensing and a Master in Business Licensing. Hardeeville Business License Coordinator Cynthia Oliver is the current BLOA secretary/treasurer.

"My 12-year tenure as a successful business license official is due to the wealth of knowledge I've received from BLOA," Oliver said. "The *Business License Handbook*, Municipal Association staff, and various website tools have been invaluable resources to my accomplishments."

Build the Bench interns

As with many local government positions, succession planning is vital in leadership roles. The Municipal Association's board of directors resolved to cultivate a leadership pipeline through the Build the Bench program, placing interns with municipalities to build a strong and diverse pool of future job candidates.

The City of Goose Creek has accepted several of the interns placed through the program. The first intern for the city, Joseph Morris, worked on projects including a city-wide micromobility program for modes of transportation like bicycles, scooters and e-bikes. He has since taken a planning job with the city. Goose Creek Special Projects Manager Alexis Kiser supervises the city's interns.

The Build the Bench program, Kiser said, has offered practical exposure to work that "is invaluable for their professional development, allowing them to understand the complexities and dynamics of local governance. By working on diverse projects, interns gain a comprehensive understanding of how different departments function and interact, preparing them for future leadership roles in public administration."

Field services managers

The Association's field services managers are available to help every city and town in South Carolina with many of the challenges that local officials face, using regular visits to municipalities, training sessions and a personal connection. For several years now, the field services managers have helped municipal officials submit American Rescue Plan Act fund reports to the U.S. Department of the Treasury.

The three field services managers often help facilitate everything from goal-setting sessions with city and town councils to training sessions on major topics like business licensing and annexation. Naomi Reed is the field services manager for the Upstate region, where she provided newly elected official training and training on the forms of government for the Town of Saluda, alongside many other municipalities. Saluda's town council found the training insightful, Mayor Miliken Matthews said.

"[Reed's] expertise and clear explanations have significantly enhanced our understanding and preparedness. We truly appreciate the time and effort [she] dedicated to our development," he said.

- > **1,160 total attendees**
at the Municipal Association's 2023 Annual Meeting, and
- > **112 attendees**
at the first-ever 2023 Small City Summit
- > **512 attendees**
at the 2024 Hometown Legislative Action Day
- > **131 elected officials**
have taken their first Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government course in the last year.
- > **1,886 MEO Institute graduates**
since 1986, when the program began, and
- > **371 Advanced MEO Institute graduates**
since that program began in 2014.
- > **194 municipalities**
with at least one MEO graduate since the founding of the MEO Institute, representing 72% of all municipalities.
- > **34 Main Street South Carolina communities**
participating at four levels, including Aiken, Florence, Greenwood, Hartsville and Laurens as the five accredited Main Street SC cities. Downtown Florence won the national Great American Main Street Award in 2023. Main Street SC partnered with the SC Broadband Office to provide technical assistance in Ridge Spring and Norway.
- > **6 months of on-site training**
coordinated by Main Street SC with each Aspiring Main Street participating downtown program, equating to over \$45,000 of services to each program.
- > **1,509 municipal employees**
around the state participate in at least one of the Municipal Association's affiliate associations, and
- > **2,049 attendees**
at affiliate association meetings within the last year.
- > **18 new graduates**
of the Municipal Court Administrators Association 101 training, and 46 graduates total since MCAA 101 began.
- > **8 "Business Licensing Essentials" virtual training sessions**
hosted by the Municipal Association's Local Revenue Services, with an average of
- > **54 business licensing officials attending**
each session.
- > **3,573 technical assistance requests**
handled by the Association's field services managers. The 3,573 total municipal contacts made by the team included 269 cities and towns out of the total 271.
- > **122 council training sessions, meetings or strategic planning sessions**
led by the Association's field services managers for the year.

Top 10 Requests for Technical Assistance

1. Networking
2. Education and training
3. American Rescue Plan Act funds
4. Finance
5. Planning and zoning
6. Business licensing
7. Human resources
8. Freedom of Information Act
9. Elections
10. Budget, audit, Local Government Fund report



Solutions

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

Retail assistance

The Association and Main Street South Carolina spent several years developing and launching WeShopSC.com, the state's only online marketplace of small businesses. The web platform supports small business owners and showcases their unique products and services for a wider audience. In 2023, Main Street SC staff brought WeShopSC training to a diverse array of businesses and Main Street directors.

Many municipalities participated in a retail recruitment training program offered by the Association and The Retail Coach. This intensive training helped cities and towns attract new businesses through marketing analyses and outreach efforts. City of Forest Acres staff were among the participants.

"We learned a lot about site selection and the importance of being able to identify your current inventory of properties," City Administrator Shaun Greenwood said. "Through a connection made at the training, we were able to secure a new Slim Chickens location to replace a long-struggling empty building. We have also been able to use the information provided by The Retail Coach to create a more interactive economic development experience at the City of Forest Acres."

Local Business License Renewal Center

Cities, towns and the Association have worked together on standardizing business licensing practices according to the SC Business License Tax Standardization Act of 2020. The law requires jurisdictions to offer their businesses the opportunity to renew their business license through the Local Business License Renewal Center, developed by the Association. In the past year, the renewal center experienced a jump in usage by more than 80% with nearly 16,000 businesses using it.

"The Local Business License Renewal Center has not only met, but exceeded my expectations," Myrtle Beach Director of Financial Services Jeremy Roof said. "The Municipal Association staff that supports the portal has been extremely responsive and has taken a cooperative proactive approach to not only design, but delivering a product that has made all business licensing officials jobs easier. All businesses that have used the portal have expressed a genuine appreciation of a renewal experience that is not rigid and complicated, but rather simple and easy."

Risk management improvements

The programs of Risk Management Services, the SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund and SC Municipal Insurance Trust, need to maintain a healthy fund balance, just as cities do to maintain financial stability. Using a capital adequacy study, RMS helped the SCMIRF board of trustees set a target surplus position and work to stabilize SCMIRF rates. The SCMIT board, recognizing overall increases in insurance costs faced by municipalities, approved an additional \$1 million in return of SCMIT surplus for 2024, increasing the total to \$4 million.

RMS loss control staff help member cities establish effective risk management practices, visiting members to help them determine what changes could reduce claims and keep employees safe. Since identifying auto losses as a trend that heavily impacts insurance costs, the loss control staff delivered three regional driver training classes and created an online auto loss prevention resource. They also updated the SCMIRF law enforcement guidelines to include the minimum standards required by Act 218 of 2023; and developed a hurricane preparedness checklist for SCMIRF members.

The City of Chester is one of those that worked with RMS loss control staff to enhance safety practices.

"Their proactive approach and diligent counsel on action plan development, coupled with their kindness and technical assistance support, have made a profound impact on our community's well-being. Our collaboration with RMS loss control staff exemplifies our commitment to working smart and prioritizing loss control," City Administrator Malik Whitaker said. "Their action plan support and technical assistance support empower us to implement effective strategies that mitigate risks and ensure the well-being of our community."

> **\$22.1 million in business license payments processed**
through the Local Business License Renewal Center in the first four months of 2024, compared to \$11.9 million processed in all of 2023 and \$3.5 million in 2022.

> **18,117 business licenses renewed**
through the LBLRC in the first four months of 2024, compared to 10,756 processed throughout all of 2023.

> **\$50 million+ in total purchases**
made through the City Connect Market, a cooperative purchasing partnership between HGACBuy and the Municipal Association launched in August 2021.

> **137 SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund members**
with the Town of Chapin and Town of Smyrna joining as the newest members.

> **131 SC Municipal Insurance Trust members**
with Chapin being the newest member.

> **21,132 courses completed through LocalGovU,**
the online training portal for the Association's Risk Management Services.

> **20,232 employees and volunteers insured**
through SCMIT.

> **\$6.1 billion in total value insured**
through SCMIRF.

> **\$442,101 grant funds disbursed**
through SCMIT and SCMIRF grants.

> **More than \$3 million collected**
in subrogation and other recoveries on behalf of SCMIT and SCMIRF members.

> **63 member-specific training sessions**
hosted by Risk Management Services Loss Control.

> **416 member visits**
conducted by Risk Management Services for SCMIT and SCMIRF members, addressing police and fire consultations, scheduled annual reviews and assessments.

> **16 consecutive years**
of the SC Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust receiving the Governmental Accounting Standards Board Award for Excellence for its financial report. SC ORBET is a trust that employers can join to pre-fund their future retirement benefit obligations.

> **482 small businesses registered for WeShopSC**
across 53 cities and 27 active individual community markets with their own market manager since the platform launched in August 2023. The website receives an average of 3,000 to 5,000 monthly visitors.

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

Allendale	Blackville
Carlisle	Clio
Dillon	Johnsonville
Lane	Lockhart
Marion	Mauldin
Simpsonville	Winnsboro

Internal Services

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

Finance systems upgrade

In 2023, the Association's Finance department undertook a major project to research, select and implement a new financial management software system. The Association partnered with development firms to achieve all necessary integration and to reduce the risks of relying on a single provider. The new software and reporting system improves budget processes, helping to validate and disperse funds more efficiently and allowing for a more timely budget report. The improved user-friendliness of the system also allows for more efficient use of staff time.

Other IT improvements

Multi-factor authentication, or MFA, adds a layer of authentication to computer access, such as a code sent to a phone that the user must enter to verify their identity and access. Because it is a difficult obstacle for cyberattacks, this authentication tool is now a requirement for cybersecurity insurance. The Association now requires MFA for staff and vendors who access its network and systems remotely.

Cross-pollination of Association efforts

The Association's wide range of services and programs means that strong collaboration between internal departments is a key component to the Association's success. The passage of the SC Business License Tax Standardization Act is a good example of this teamwork in action. The Association's legislative team helped secure a bill that was fair and practical for both cities and businesses. Once the new law was in effect, legislative staff worked closely with the Association's Local Revenue Services and other departments — including Education and Training, Advocacy and Communications and Field Services — for the rollout of the Local Business License Renewal Center and for the highly detailed work of helping cities and towns with business licensing to standardize their processes.



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, Erica Wright*

Fall Advocacy Meeting

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

Legislative Tracking and Reports

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

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

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

Staff Contact: Casey Fields

Hometown Legislative Action Day

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

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*

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

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: Elizabeth Copeland*

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: Ken Ivey*

Training Institutes

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

SC Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

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

Staff Contact: Urica Floyd

SC Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

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

Business Licensing Training Institute

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

Municipal Clerks and Treasurers Institute

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

Annual Meeting

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

Technical Assistance

Field Services

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

Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC helps its members revitalize their downtowns into vibrant centers of commerce and community by using the National Main Street Center's Main Street Approach,TM which focuses on historic preservation and placemaking. Main Street SC provides member programs of varying levels of preparedness and resources with knowledge and tools to develop community-driven and comprehensive revitalization strategies. It provides on-site consultation and technical assistance to local programs that meet specific requirements. Quarterly workshops, networking sessions and on demand trainings also assist local Main Street programs in their efforts. At the startup level, members build capacity for downtown revitalization. At the Aspiring Main Street level, participants receive three years of technical assistance and then transition into a Classic Main Street program. Members at the highest level meet national accreditation standards. Each year, Main Street SC honors exceptional member accomplishments through its Inspiration Awards. *Staff Contact: Jenny Boulware*

Information Resources

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

Publications

- *Annexation Handbook*
- *Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments*
- *Election Handbook*
- *Forms and Powers of Municipal Government*
- *Handbook for Municipal Officials in South Carolina*
- *The Municipal Association of South Carolina 1930 – 2015: A History of Shared Voices, Shared Knowledge, Shared Solutions*
- *How to Conduct Effective Meeting*
- *Incorporation Handbook*
- *Model Employee Handbook for SC Municipalities*

- *Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory*
- *Public Official's Guide to Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act* (published by the SC Press Association)
- *South Carolina Business Licensing Handbook*
- *Tips for Hometown Media Success*

Staff Contact: Eric Budds

Website

The Municipal Association's website, www.masc.sc, offers more than 2,000 pages and 2,000 documents, presentations and links to external resources. With a responsive design to fit the needs and formats of mobile and desktop devices, the site includes a powerful search engine and information center to help users navigate to specific resources of interest. *Staff Contact: Meredith Houck*

Uptown

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

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

Daily News

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

The Uplift

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

Achievement Awards

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

Staff Contact: Meredith Houck

Solutions

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

Local Revenue Services

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

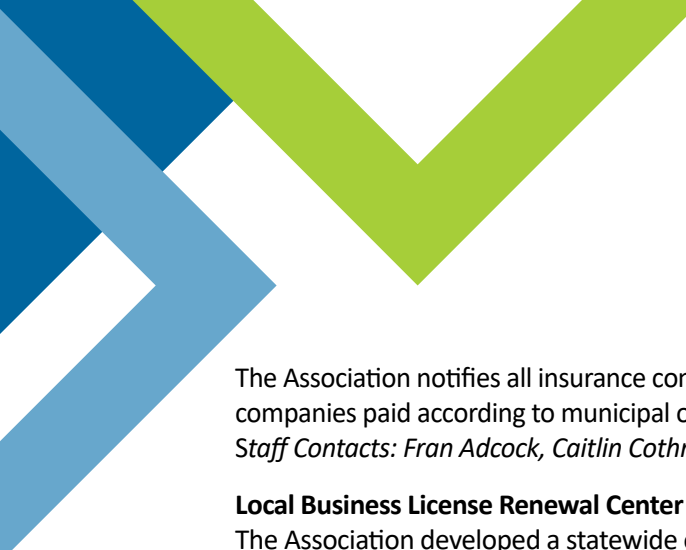
Brokers Tax Program

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

Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Kaylee Summerton

Insurance Tax Program

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



The Association notifies all insurance companies of the payment process, uses industry data to confirm all companies paid according to municipal ordinances, and provides a portal for the reporting and payment of the tax. *Staff Contacts: Fran Adcock, Caitlin Cothran, Anita Lancaster, Kaylee Summerton*

Local Business License Renewal Center

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

Setoff Debt Program

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

Telecommunications Tax Program

The Association centralizes the business license tax due to municipalities from telecommunication companies. Each December, the Association sends a notice to all telecommunications companies for the municipalities participating in the program. By law, municipalities can assess this tax only on the voice portion of a phone bill. The system streamlines the payment process for telecommunications companies. It also saves cities and towns time and money by eliminating the need for each to perform the same processes. *Staff Contacts: Caitlin Cothran, Kaylee Summerton*

Risk Management Services

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

The SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund provides all lines of property and casualty coverage, including general liability, law enforcement liability, public officials' liability, cyber liability and property and automobile coverage. The SC Municipal Insurance Trust, provides workers' compensation coverage for municipal employees.

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

Training

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

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

- Law enforcement simulator: RMS offers members access to a law enforcement training simulator that allows officers to practice their decision-making skills and responses to resistance.

Loss Control/Technical Assistance

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

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

Grants

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

- SCMIRF awards the Law Enforcement Liability Reduction Grant Program grants to member law enforcement agencies to purchase stun guns or Tasers, Taser cameras, body cameras and other equipment.
- SCMIRF awards the Public Works Property and Liability Reduction Grant Program grants to member public works and utilities departments to purchase items to address the frequency and severity of claims, including back-up cameras, collision avoidance systems, concrete scarifiers, sewer cameras, meter locks and other equipment.
- SCMIT awards grants to member law enforcement, fire and public works departments to purchase work-zone safety equipment, soft body armor and other protective gear.

South Carolina Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust

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

Hometown Economic Development Grants

The Municipal Association's Hometown Economic Development Grants provide cities and towns with funds to implement economic development projects that will have a positive effect on the quality of life in their communities. The Hometown Economic Development Grants are awarded annually. *Staff Contact: Jake Broom*

Technology Services

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

City Connect Market

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

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Pillars of Civility

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

Be as eager to listen as to speak.

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

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

Concentrate on facts, not theories.

Ask questions to learn. Answer questions with respect.

Make your point about the issue, not the person.

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

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

Civility. Respect. Solutions.



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