



2021 Annual Report

MASC Municipal Association
of South CarolinaSM

What a year.

If we look back to last summer, things in our state and nation were bad and getting worse. Businesses were closing, parents were struggling to plan for the upcoming school year, and tensions between police departments and the communities they serve grew to be as high as they have been in years.

It was one of the most trying years of our lives — of our state's recent history — but we're coming out the other side stronger than ever.

During COVID-19, our cities and towns led the charge. Decisions made by local leaders maintained public safety, accelerated economic recovery and gave people the sense of calm and hope that they needed. Through it all, the Municipal Association of South Carolina worked hard to connect local leaders with the numerous resources, virtual trainings and model ordinances that they needed to lead their cities and towns.

Local authority is a bedrock principle of cities, towns and the Municipal Association and it must be protected. This year, we have worked to preserve it on fronts such as compliance with the Business License Tax Standardization and Small Wireless Facility Deployment Acts.

Law enforcement reform continues to be a priority as the Association advocates for improved training measures and offers law enforcement resources, such as model policies, response to resistance simulator training and best practice training videos, through the programs of Risk Management Services.

The public health crisis of 2020 showed why well-trained and empowered local leadership is so critical. Municipal officials are the most accessible, accountable and agile leaders in our state. You acted when others hesitated to protect your hometown.

Whether it was a socially-distanced movie night in the park, a grant program to keep local businesses afloat or a vaccine clinic in the town hall parking lot, cities and towns provided safety and normalcy during an unsafe and abnormal time.

When things get tough, cities and towns step up and serve our residents. The Association stands ready to support your efforts.



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

B. Todd Glover
Municipal Association of SC
Executive Director

2020 | 2021

The Municipal Association of South Carolina, representing the state's 271 incorporated cities and towns, remains dedicated to the principles of its founding in 1930 — to pursue initiatives that cities and towns can carry out more efficiently and effectively together through the Association than they can individually. Through shared voices, knowledge and solutions, the Association pursues this mission.

A Year of Disruption and Opportunity

COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic brought a destructive and transformative force to South Carolina, creating extraordinary challenges for emergency management and government services while rewriting the state's economic situation and changing patterns of work, education and recreation.

Through all of this, city and town governments played a vital role in slowing the spread of COVID-19. Mask ordinances, which first appeared in June 2020 and were enacted throughout much of the state, were found by the SC Department of Health and Environmental Control to decrease cases by more than 46% within four weeks.

The Municipal Association strove to be flexible and responsive throughout the disruptions, using virtual work, virtual meetings and ongoing technical assistance to help cities and towns maintain effective services. The Association provided legal guidance, virtual education meetings and new ways for municipal leaders and staff to connect online.

Business licensing

The passage of Act 176, the SC Business License Tax Standardization Act, came as a major legislative victory for cities and towns in September 2020, as the law preserved the important municipal revenue source of business license taxes.

The law brought with it a need for every city and town with a business license tax to make several changes to their licensing practices during 2021. The Municipal Association took compliance on as a major project during 2021, developing large amounts of informational resources and dedicating staff members as standardization liaisons for specific cities, so that leaders and licensing officials would be able to receive personalized assistance on an ongoing basis.

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.

Business license standardization

A critical revenue source for cities and towns, business license revenue had been under attack in the General Assembly for years. After more than five years of work, the Municipal Association's advocacy team successfully negotiated for Act 176, the SC Business License Tax Standardization Act, to preserve this revenue source while also providing measures sought by the business community to make the licensing process easier. The advocacy work involved also allowed the Association to develop key relationships with business leaders and legislative leadership to help with other issues as well.

The new law's success depends on all municipalities standardizing their practices, and it left them with a little over a year to achieve compliance before January 2022. To help, the Association created a yearlong campaign of educational material ranging from articles and emails to podcasts and blog posts. The materials focused on a seven-step process that municipalities can use to achieve full compliance.

The Association created a new model business license ordinance to help cities and towns meet Act 176's standards, and this was not the only time it developed a model ordinance after legislative advocacy in the past year. After the Small Wireless Facilities Deployment Act took effect in September 2020, the Association created a model ordinance to help municipalities regulate the appearance of small wireless facilities.

Pandemic resiliency

When the pandemic began, the Association mobilized quickly to provide critical information by internet, email and print. Legal guidance included model ordinances for socially-distant virtual council meetings and mask requirements, interpretations of the numerous pandemic-related executive orders from Gov. Henry McMaster, and explanations of how to handle elections in light of delays in the release of census data. Guidance on the \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan relief bill came as part of the Association's growing focus on federal legislation.

Feature articles in the *Uptown* newsletter illustrated the ways that cities and towns have maintained services and programs throughout the pandemic so that others could build on these efforts. These stories highlighted the innovations cities developed to make virtual council meetings work, the ways that they kept arts and culture programs alive even when large, crowded events weren't possible, and the projects they pursued to help their local businesses in a time of revenue disruption.

The City of Aiken, for example, moved immediately in March 2020 to develop a \$1 million loan program to provide relief for local merchants and provided technical assistance as well, as explained by Tim O'Briant, Aiken's economic development director, in the story.

"I've very proud of the help we were able to offer, and we've gotten a wonderful reaction from the business community," he said.

Virtual meetings

The Municipal Association itself needed to continue its meetings through virtual formats as well. In the case of Hometown Legislative Action Week, it took what has traditionally been a single day of advocacy in Columbia and transformed it into a format that would work better online. Released throughout a week, HLAW in 2021 was a steady roll of videos on advocacy topics from broadband expansion to law enforcement reform that was optimized for sharing through email and social media engagement. The Association's Annual Meeting, where prerecorded sessions focused on COVID-19 response and recovery, also offered a live session that served as the Association's first-ever virtual business meeting.

17 Hometown Legislative
Action Week videos

3,200+ plays

325 bills tracked in 2021
the first half of a two-year session

365,476
visitors to www.masc.sc

1 million
total page views

50 episodes of the
City Quick Connect podcast

6,100+ plays

113 advocacy tweets

267 tweets on
municipal topics

46,000+
impressions

130,000+
impressions

Knowledge

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

Online training and development opportunities

Professional development often centers around meetings and networking, so the pandemic created new challenges for the Association's training programs. Association staff helped facilitate all-virtual meetings for many of its affiliate associations. The Association's Risk Management Services and SC Other Retirement Benefits Employer Trust meetings also took place virtually. As meeting restrictions eased in 2021, the Association's staff developed a hybrid meeting model allowing for attendees and speakers to attend in person or virtually.

Early in 2020, the Association launched its online version of the Planning and Zoning Orientation training, a six-hour course required by law for planning and zoning officials. Other training opportunities that moved online for the first time included the popular "You've Been Elected, Now What?" session for newly elected officials as well other Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government courses.

Cayce City Councilmember Timothy James was among those who attended MEO courses virtually. "While I was originally hesitant about attending both Advanced courses on the same day by virtual means," he said, "I found the programs extremely interesting and very well managed — and so glad I was a part!"

In late 2020, the Association launched an updated listserv platform for its affiliate organizations. The new listserves allow for a more collaborative, user-friendly way for officials to share best practices, learn from the experiences of peers, build professional networks with colleagues and learn more about trends in municipal government around South Carolina. The new system places user discussions in a single, easy-to-follow and searchable location, eliminating the need for users to search through old emails to find information. It allows users to set up polls for advice on common issues, and users can customize their notifications and bookmark topics of interest.

Main Street South Carolina

Main Street SC, the technical assistance program that helps communities as they revitalize their historic downtowns and build their local economies, grew in several ways in the last year. It established multiple levels of member participation, ranging from Friends of Main Street for startup organizations to the highest level, Accredited Main Street, for programs that meet national accreditation standards and are members of the National Main Street Center.

Main Street SC also created its first-ever annual report to showcase the efforts of its member communities as well as a visual rebranding of the organization and launch of a social media presence. In addition to new training materials like its "Main Street 101" videos and on-demand small business training sessions, Main Street SC played a key role in circulating critical information during the pandemic, offering virtual check-ins and training, survey and promotion assistance, and program stabilization grant support.

Field services training and planning sessions

The Association's field services managers, Charlie Barrineau and Jeff Shacker, ordinarily travel the state to provide on-site assistance for cities and towns and to conduct work sessions, training and strategic goal setting sessions with councils. They were unable to conduct much of their on-the-road work for a time during the pandemic, but answering technical assistance questions by phone and email, never slowed down. When in-person work resumed, they witnessed a growing number of cities and towns requesting goal-setting sessions. Some municipalities take part in these sessions every year, building teamwork and cooperation among elected officials. Among the 25 sessions that took place after travel restrictions eased, 11 were municipalities that had never used these sessions before.

802 total MEO Institute participants

53% of the 1,594 municipal elected officials in SC have taken at least one MEO course

188 municipalities now have at least one MEO graduate

69% of the total 271 municipalities

4,853 viewings of the new Planning and Zoning Orientation training

9,229 hours total watched of the six-hour training

429 participants completed at least one Planning and Zoning Orientation training session

30 virtual meetings total, with another 13 in-person meetings

25 annual goal-setting sessions

for city and town councils hosted by the Municipal Association's field services managers, including 11 councils that had never before participated

17 council training sessions hosted by field services managers, with another 42 training sessions for other municipal staff

75+ technical assistance requests received on average per week by field services managers

27 Achievement Award entries

This year's winners:

- Bluffton
 - Conway
 - Greenville
 - Hanahan
 - Hartsville
 - Hilton Head Island
 - Lowrys
 - Newberry
 - Surfside Beach
-

In 2020, Main Street SC's reinvestment statistics for its 28 member communities show:

- 273 net new jobs
- \$54 million in private and public investment
- 90 new businesses
- 154 rehabilitation projects
- 38 public improvement projects
- 39 construction projects

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 license standardization support

In addition to the large amounts of guidance material the Municipal Association developed to help cities and towns comply with the SC Business License Tax Standardization Act, the Association also dedicated significant staff time to help leadership and licensing officials in each municipality comply with the law. Liaisons from the Association's staff worked — and continue to work — directly with dozens of cities and towns throughout 2020 and 2021 to answer questions and manage changes to licensing data made necessary by the new law.

The City of Newberry was among those municipalities that worked with the Association's staff on achieving compliance with Act 176. "City staff realized how important business license standardization had become in a more global economy," City Manager Matt DeWitt said. "Fortunately, over the years staff has remained focused on our business license classifications and in passing standard business license ordinances. So, our migration to compliance was relatively painless thanks to Newberry's active and engaged involvement with the Association."

The new law also requires all licensing jurisdictions to begin using an online business license renewal payment portal, the Local Business License Renewal Center, to be hosted and managed by the SC Revenue and Fiscal Affairs Office. The Association has assisted in the development of this portal, and during 2021 has worked with five municipalities — Anderson, Cayce, Greenwood, Hanahan and Hardeeville — to test the renewal center before it enters more general use in 2022. Feedback received from the testers has helped to improve the system for businesses and licensing officials alike.

Risk management training resources

As with other areas in the Association, Risk Management Services worked through the pandemic to build a library of short safety videos available through the LocalGovU online training center. The first four videos created were "Emergency Action Planning," "Heat Stress," "Required Annual Inspection Energy Control Procedure" and "Fall Protection," with more on the way.

RMS staff also worked with a training and data analysts to develop training assignment lists in LocalGovU, which allows member cities and towns to assign courses to employees on critical safety topics. The project included a suggested "Top 10" list of courses for public works, utilities and parks staff. Other lists of suggested courses help members easily set up training for new employee orientation, management safety training, as well as health and wellness training.

Premium reductions, surplus returns, grants

The SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund requires its members with law enforcement departments to complete a risk assessment to determine how well the department handles high-risk activities. In 2021, RMS opened this assessment to departments that participate only in the SC Municipal Insurance Trust. Also, the risk assessment previously allowed for a 5% premium reduction if the member scored 90% or better on the assessment. The premium reduction is no longer tied to a score — now it is available to every member that submits the risk assessment. These changes have helped RMS to work with more members toward the safety improvements that they can accomplish with existing resources.

To help offset the damage that the pandemic created for city and town budgets, the SC Municipal Insurance Trust board approved increasing the 2021 return of surplus to its members from \$3 million to \$4 million. Additionally, SCMIT funded a second round of a \$200,000 emergency grant program for members, available in amounts of up to \$2,000 with no application needed, to help municipalities with the cost of cleaning materials and personal protective equipment used during the pandemic.

130 SCMIT members
New members: Hanahan, Summit

13,656
LocalGovU courses taken

130 SCMIRF members
New members: Rockville, Van Wyck

313 attendees in
Risk Management Services virtual
training, with an additional
59 for in-person training

\$4.5 billion
in total insured value in
SCMIT and SCMIRF

\$450,000
total available Risk Management
Services grant funds
More than \$4 million in grants awarded to date

18,359 employees and
volunteers insured for workers'
compensation through SCMIT

More than **\$350,000**
awarded through 12 Hometown
Economic Development Grants
Winners: Belton, James Island, Lake View,
McClellanville, McConnells, Pageland,
Patrick, Pinewood, Salley, Springfield, Troy,
Woodruff

300,000+
debt- and tax-related records
reviewed by the Municipal
Association's Local Revenue
Services

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.

Remote work and Association-wide upgrades

Like other workplaces, social distancing requirements impacted the way that Municipal Association's staff operated. In March 2020, the Association transitioned to flexible and largely remote operations to maintain staff health without losing effectiveness. It also employed safety protocols for those times when in-office work was necessary. The Association returned to full, in-person operations in June 2021.

During the period of disruptions, the Association invested in several technology solutions to help make remote work effective, even after the pandemic. It launched a completely web-based version of its primary file storage and sharing system and began using a business communication platform that allows all staff to use workspace chat and videoconferencing.

Finance Department upgrades

The Association's Finance Department established a new banking relationship to bring about decreased costs while increasing earnings above market rates. The department also launched a paperless system for documents, which has helped make its operations more financially efficient. The department also upgraded its corporate performance management software. As the Finance Department brought new systems online, even while working from home, it kept the former systems in place to prevent delays in any critical functions.

Risk Management Services upgrades

Risk Management Services and technology staff created an updated version of the online Risk Management Institute transcript, which can indicate whether course credit is going to expire after three years if the participant has not yet graduated.

RMS staff also worked with VC3, the Association's technology partner, to develop automatic emailing of the SC Municipal Insurance Trust/SC Municipal Insurance and Risk Financing Fund Annual Review. This document, provided by email at the beginning of each year to every SCMIT and SCMIRF member, gives an overview of the previous year of coverage, claims and grant usage, as well as whether the member's staff has participated in RMS-offered training. It helps the member understand how it has used its available benefits ahead of the scheduled member visit with RMS loss control staff.

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 to address city challenges and testifies against legislation that would harm cities. Partnerships play an important part in the Association's advocacy efforts. The Association also monitors federal legislation through the National League of Cities and advocates on behalf of South Carolina cities and towns when federal issues impact the state. *Staff 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 meet those challenges. Based in part on input gathered during these conversations, the Association's legislative committee and board of directors set the Association's annual Advocacy Initiatives. *Staff Contact: Casey Fields*

Legislative Tracking and Reports

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

Each Friday during the legislative session, municipal officials receive *From the Dome to Your Home*, which recaps the week's major legislative events and previews the upcoming week's activities.

The report is posted on the Association's website and shared with more than 5,000 social media followers. The legislative team expands on the report with additional information through regular episodes of the *City Quick Connect* podcast during the legislative session.

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

Staff Contact: Casey Fields

Hometown Legislative Action Day

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

Publication Partnerships

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

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

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

City Connect Blog and City Quick Connect Podcast

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

Knowledge

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

Affiliate Associations

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

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

Association of South Carolina Mayors

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

Building Officials Association of SC

The Building Officials Association of SC is a professional development organization of building and code enforcement officials. Members are dedicated to safeguarding life, health and property through the uniform application, interpretation and enforcement of building codes adopted by local

governments. BOASC offers education and training opportunities to its members, promotes the importance of building codes and their enforcement, monitors issues before the SC Building Codes Council and the General Assembly, and provides technical assistance to local government officials. *Staff Contact: Elizabeth Copeland*

Municipal Court Administration Association of SC

The Municipal Court Administration Association of South Carolina offers training at two workshops for court administrators, clerks of court, municipal judges and other municipal employees involved in court administration. The Supreme Court of South Carolina Commission on CLE and Specialization and the Office of Victims Services recognize these workshops for continuing education credits. *Staff Contact: Sara 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 national Human Resources Certification Institute and the Society for Human Resources Management recognize 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 the 10 councils of governments' locations or through an on-demand format found on the Association's website. *Staff Contact: Urica Floyd*

SC Advanced Municipal Elected Officials Institute of Government

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

Staff Contact: Urica Floyd

Business Licensing Training Institute

The Business Licensing Training Institute educates municipal and county officials on the basics of administering a business licensing program. To complete the institute, officials must complete three day-long training classes, which are offered across three years. Once they complete the training classes, officials may take an exam to earn the Accreditation in Business Licensing credential. The SC Business Licensing Officials Association sponsors the institute. *Staff Contact: 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 two field services managers travel the state to offer hands-on technical assistance, training and consultation to help municipalities address challenges. *Staff Contacts: Charlie Barrineau and Jeff Shacker*

Main Street South Carolina

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

Staff Contact: Jenny Boulware

Information Resources

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

Publications

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

- *Annexation Handbook*
- *Comprehensive Planning Guide for Local Governments*
- *Election Handbook*
- *Forms and Powers of Municipal Government*
- *Handbook for Municipal Officials in South Carolina*
- *The Municipal Association of South Carolina 1930-2015: A History of Shared Voices, Shared Knowledge, Shared Solutions*
- *How to Conduct Effective Meeting*
- *Incorporation Handbook*
- *Model Employee Handbook for SC Municipalities*
- *Municipal Officials and Legislative Directory*
- *Public Official's Guide to Compliance with the Freedom of Information Act* (published by the SC Press Association)
- *Raising Hometown Voices to a New Level of Influence*, an advocacy guide
- *South Carolina Business Licensing Handbook*
- *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 combined efforts of member cities. Each program operates under the direction of a board of trustees composed of representatives from its membership.

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

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

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

Staff Contact: Heather Ricard

Training

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

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

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

Loss Control/Technical Assistance

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

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

Grants

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

- 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 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 make a positive impact on the quality of life in their communities. The Hometown Economic Development Grants are awarded annually.

Staff Contact: Scott Slatton

Technology Services

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

Cable Franchise Assistance and Telecommunication Infrastructure Siting Program

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

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