

WHAT IS THE LEAGUE?

One of our distinguished past presidents very aptly described the Alabama League of Municipalities as this state's "Community of Communities." In a very real sense, the community spirit that vitalizes each city and town in Alabama finds expression in the structure and the activities of our municipal organization. The League is a composite of the concerns, problems and goals of all of its 446 municipalities. It has demonstrated repeatedly throughout its 77-year history that the unified voices and the collective actions of dedicated municipal officials, working through the League, are a compelling force in articulating the concerns, solving the problems and achieving the goals of its individual member municipalities.

The League was organized in 1935 as a voluntary association of about 100 member municipalities. Through the years, its voluntary membership has more than quadrupled. Its staff operation has become vastly more capable of meeting the ever-growing needs of municipal officials and personnel for legal and technical assistance and for information services during a period of revolutionary urban growth and change. Still, the League has retained the same basic objectives that motivated its founding more than 70 years ago:

- To conduct continuing studies of the legislative, administrative and operational needs, problems and functions of Alabama's municipal governments and to publish the results of these studies for the benefit of member cities and towns.
- To maintain a staff capable of finding answers to legal and administrative questions asked by elected officials and personnel of member municipalities.
- To hold conferences and meetings at which views and experiences of municipal officials and personnel may be exchanged.
- To encourage in the people of Alabama a sympathetic appreciation of the duties, responsibilities and rights of both municipal government and its citizens.
- To work to secure enactment of legislation, at both the state and federal levels, that will enable all cities and towns to perform their functions more efficiently and effectively.

Organization of the League

The League organization consists of the president, vice president and the executive committee, which is composed of five elected municipal officials from each of the state's seven congressional districts, the active past presidents, and the executive director. League officers and members of the executive committee are elected by the voting delegates at the annual convention.

In addition, six standing committees are charged with the review and development of League policies and goals which encompass a broad spectrum of issues affecting municipal government. The chair and vice chair of each of these standing committees are also elected annually at the convention. Committee members are selected by the respective committee chairs to provide representation from each congressional district and to ensure representation of cities and towns of all sizes on each committee.

Besides developing policies and goals for the Alabama League, the standing committees are responsible for reviewing national municipal policy developed by the National League of Cities. Committee members, through our League representatives on NLC committees, may suggest amendments to the national policy during the annual Congress of Cities.

Standing Committees

The League's six standing committees are: State and Federal Legislation, which also serves as a resolutions and screening committee; Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations; Energy, Environment and Natural Resources; Community and Economic Development; Transportation, Public Safety and Communication; and Human Development

These committees meet annually with resource advisors to review existing League policy and the national policy and to adopt revised goals and recommendations in the respective areas of each committee. The Committee on State and Federal Legislation meets before each Regular Session of the Alabama Legislature to consider the recommendations of the standing committees and to develop the League's legislative program.

The Committee on State and Federal Legislation also carefully studies proposed legislation which may prove harmful to municipal government. While the legislature is in session, the committee may meet to assess the progress of the League program and to review potentially dangerous legislation. The committee has the additional duty of meeting at the annual League convention to review resolutions prepared for submission at the annual business session and to receive suggested resolutions from individual delegates.

Participation in NLC

Since 1935, the Alabama League has been a member of the National League of Cities (NLC), our national counterpart. Members of our League are thereby entitled to participate in the annual Congress of Cities where national municipal policy is formed and educational programs are conducted. Our members may become direct members of NLC if additional benefits and assistance are desired from the national organization. Throughout the years, Alabama municipal officials have been extremely active in NLC.

Individual Services to Members

Individual service to member municipalities, on a day-to-day basis, is one of the most important functions of the League. These services include research to help local officials make decisions in the performance of their many duties; legal opinions from the League's four attorneys; publication of the League's bi-monthly magazine and *This Week*, a weekly electronic newsletter; weekly legislative bulletins when the legislature is in session; and publication of booklets and information bulletins to better enable officials and personnel to perform their duties. In addition, the League has an extensive web page on the internet at www.alalm.org. Plus, you can follow the League on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ALALM>.

The League has brought legal actions on behalf of its member municipalities and has filed briefs in many other cases affecting our cities and towns. League staff and officers frequently appear before state agencies and legislative committees to testify on rules, regulations and proposed legislation affecting our members.

The League has also established a number of special programs for member municipalities. Some of these programs are operated directly by the League while others are privately held companies whose products or services are endorsed by the League. Any League member city, town or instrumentality of the League member may contract for any or all of these services at very competitive rates.

League-Operated Programs

- **Municipal Revenue Service** – This League program has been available to League members for many decades. This service collects delinquent municipal insurance license taxes and has recovered a tremendous amount of lost municipal revenue over the years.
- **Municipal Workers Compensation Fund (MWCF)** – The League sponsors the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund, which provides a means for municipalities and their boards to save on the cost of workers compensation coverage.
- **Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC)** – The Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC) was formed by League members in the late 1980s to provide liability and property insurance coverage for member municipalities. AMIC and MWCF take pride in their competitive rates, strong safety services and record of savings for members over the years.
- **Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation (AMFund)** – AMFund was developed by the Alabama League of Municipalities to assist Alabama municipalities fund local projects and purchases. The purpose of AMFund is to provide low-cost financing to municipalities in Alabama. Tax-exempt bonds are issued and the bond proceeds will fund AMFund, from which individual municipalities can borrow at low tax-exempt interest rates to fund almost any municipal equipment or project.
- **Municipal Intercept Service (MIS)** – MIS was formed in 2014. This program allows municipalities and their entities to submit uncollected finalized debts to the Alabama Department of Revenue. Those debts are set-off against individual income tax refunds.

League-Endorsed Programs

- **Cable Television Franchise Management Service** – This League-endorsed program provides technical assistance to municipalities relating to cable television franchise management.
- **Model City Ordinance Review Program** – This program uses the expertise of law students working through the Alabama Law Institute to revise municipal ordinances.
- **US Communities Government Purchasing Alliance** – Jointly founded by the National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, National Institute of Government Purchasing, United States Conference of Mayors and the Association of School Business Officials International to provide high quality government contracts to all U.S. local governments, this program provides Alabama's municipalities the opportunity to piggyback on competitively bid contracts; take advantage of the enormous collective purchasing power of public agencies nationwide; and leverage these savings to their own advantage.
- **CGI Streaming Video** - Founded in 1988, CGI's products and services for Community Image Marketing have been used by over 2000 communities in North America! All of CGI's programs are offered at NO COST to municipalities, and are specially designed to streamline communication and strengthen communities. The League continues to look for even more programs to benefit its member municipalities. Besides saving money for our members, all of these programs contribute to the operation of the League and help keep membership dues down.

The Legislative Function

In every session of the Alabama Legislature for the past 81 years, the League has served as the guardian and the voice of municipal interests. This is a vitally important function, since Alabama municipalities are creatures of the Legislature and are dependent upon it for their powers and their very existence. League legislative programs through the years have produced over hundreds of general acts which directly benefit municipal government and its citizens. Cities and

Towns in Alabama now receive many millions of dollars each year in state-shared revenues as a direct result of the League's legislative efforts.

Besides working for passage of League legislative proposals, the League staff must continually monitor and report on all types of legislation, at both the state and federal levels, which may affect cities and towns.

Training Programs

Over the past years, the League has worked closely with the University of Alabama, Auburn University, Jacksonville State University, the University of North Alabama, Faulkner University and other educational institutions and groups to sponsor training programs for municipal officials and employees. In 1987, the League, in cooperation with the College of Continuing Education at the University of Alabama, established the John G. Burton Endowment for the Support of Municipal Programs. The fund honors the League's first president and the "Father of Municipal Education in Alabama." This perpetual fund, to which municipalities, individuals and corporations may contribute, is used to increase training programs and opportunities for municipal officials and employees.

In 1994, the League established the Elected Officials Training Program for elected municipal officials. This voluntary program was the second in the nation and provides elected officials an opportunity to receive continuing education training. Upon obtaining 40 credit hours of training, the elected official will be presented with the designation of Certified Municipal Official (CMO). Several years later, due to the program's popularity, an Advanced CMO Program was established. In 2015, the League introduced a new training level, the Emeritus level, which recognizes meritorious continued participation in League training programs, events and service.

Publications and Communications

The League publishes *The Alabama Municipal Journal*, a magazine prepared by the staff which annually provides more than 400 pages of timely information on the operation of city and town governments. *The Alabama Municipal Journal* is mailed to all elected officials and to top administrative and legal personnel of member cities and towns. Members of the Legislature also receive the magazine as well as the Alabama Congressional Delegation, sister leagues throughout the country, subscribers and friends. The total circulation of *The Alabama Municipal Journal* is approximately 4,500.

The League provides a weekly e-newsletter entitled *This Week from the League* that informs and updates members on items that are important to them.

As mentioned earlier, the League's *Statehouse Advocate* is electronically transmitted or mailed weekly to each member municipality when the Legislature is in session. In addition to these regular publications, the League staff prepares numerous books, information bulletins and special reports on specific subjects of interest to municipal officials and maintains a Facebook page.

The League staff continually attempts to keep the public and the news media informed about issues affecting municipal government in Alabama and to promote the objectives of the League and its member municipalities. Press releases are issued as needed to wire services, newspapers and radio and television stations. The League staff also prepares local news items at the request of individual municipal officials. In addition, members of the League staff make appearances before a number of organizations, on request, throughout the state to discuss the problems and goals of municipal government.

In addition, the League offers several computer programs for purchase to its members such as *League Law* (which offers an easy method of searching for court decisions and opinions of the Attorney General that are of interest to municipalities).

Conclusion

As the foregoing notes indicate, the League is a multi-purpose organization, the goals of which are to promote more efficient and effective government for the citizens of Alabama. The League is a tremendous resource for municipal officials and personnel. Municipal officials are urged to take advantage of these resources, to call on the League staff whenever necessary and to attend as many educational programs, seminars and conventions as possible. The rewards will benefit you as municipal officials and the citizens that you have been elected to serve.