The Local Officials' GUIDE to MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT

presented by

The Alabama League of Municipalities

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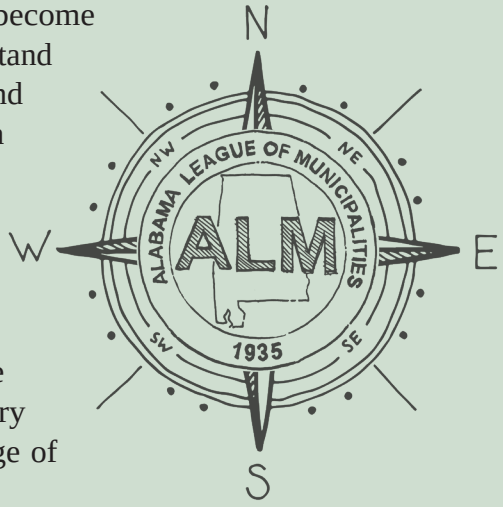
In his foreword for the 1955 publication *Some Facts About Municipal Government in Alabam*a, the Alabama League of Municipalities' first executive director, Ed E. Reid (1935-1965), made the following observations:

It is an alarming fact that many people take their municipal government so much for granted. They become interested in it only when some controversial issue develops and otherwise assume that its routine operations are of little importance to them. They overlook the fact that the whole pattern of daily life is constantly influenced by their municipal government. It supplies water, sewage service, garbage collection, police and fire protection, streets, traffic control, recreational facilities and countless other functions. Some of these are primarily a convenience, but many of them vitally affect the health, safety and welfare of the municipality's residents. Moreover, they are financed by the residents of the municipality through taxes and other revenue devices. In short, every citizen has much at stake in the operations of his municipality's government and should show a degree of interest which reflects this. Certainly, he ought not simply take it for granted.

In addition to the services it supplies, there are other reasons why municipal government is of the utmost importance in our whole scheme of democratic government. Municipal government is a training ground in democracy and governmental statesmanship. Municipal government is also the level at which the citizen can most directly participate in the democratic process. Our state and national governments cover such a wide scope of activities that we cannot hope, as individuals, to follow all of them. We cannot enjoy frequent contacts with our representatives on those levels and often lack the information necessary to understand their problems.

On the municipal level, however, we can become thoroughly familiar with local problems, understand the policies of the city or town government and manifest opinions on these matters through direct contact with our elected officials. For these reasons, and many others, it is important to each of us that we have a good municipal government – that it must be honest, efficient, economical and progressive. This cannot be fully achieved without the active interest and participation of every citizen, which in turn requires some knowledge of municipal government.



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Dear Members,

Congratulations on entering municipal public service! Whatever made you want to run for office - whether it was a problem you could fix, a situation you wished to improve in the lives of your neighbors or a vision of a brighter future for your community - you have been elected! Your question of "what can I do to help my city or town be the best it can be?" has been answered by a vote of confidence from your neighbors and a seat at the table.

The next question for you on this journey is a little harder to answer – now what? The Alabama League of Municipalities has been answering that question since 1935. The League comes in to help show you the path forward. Formed as an advocate in the Alabama Legislature, ALM has expanded to include indispensable educational opportunities for new and incumbent municipal officials to navigate their time in office. As a new official in a member municipality, you now have access to all the resources, education and training that the League has to offer.

You will find we have quite the portfolio of services and resources to assist you in being your best self. Throughout our 90 years of existence, we have created several programs to bring additional value to our member cities and towns, such as the Municipal Workers Compensation Fund, the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation, the Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation, Municipal Intercept Services and the Economic Development Academy. We have also adopted the Alabama Communities of Excellence program and launched the Live Locally Alabama campaign all while continuing to focus on our original goal of being the unified voice for municipalities!

In 2024, ALM was successful in passing legislation establishing mandatory training for all municipal officials. The act specifically requires mayors and councilmembers to complete 10 hours of training annually, provided by ALM, during their first term in office. We are thrilled to have partnered with the Alabama Community College System, ACCS, to host many of the topics on their website, which provides you access to training materials 24/7. To learn more about accessing these trainings, please contact Mary Pollard using her information listed on the opposite page.

Additionally, we will offer much of this training in-person, and we hope to see you at one of our four regional orientation trainings this fall. These are designed to provide you with an overview of municipal governance and fiscal responsibilities. To register and learn more, visit www.almonline.org.

See our list of our personnel on page 16. They are here to assist you with any questions that may arise. We appreciate your willingness to serve your community and look forward to your engagement in our organization to best prepare you for the next four years.

Peace be with you,

Gregory D. Cochran
Executive Director

The voice of Alabama's municipalities since 1935

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SAVE THE DATE!

Make plans to join the League for training in 2026!

- **January 21**
  Legislative Advocacy Day, Montgomery
- **March 14-18**
  NLC Congressional City Conference, Washington, D.C.
- **April 28 - May 1**
  Annual Convention and Expo, Montgomery
- **Spring and Summer**
  CMO Regional Trainings *(full details TBD)*
- **August**
  In-State Congressional Luncheons *(full details TBD)*
- **Fall**
  Standing Committees Meetings, Montgomery
- **October/November**
  Municipal Leadership Institute and ALM Graduation Ceremonies *(full details TBD)*
- **November 18 - 21**
  NLC City Summit, Nashville, TN

Visit almonline.org for ALM training and registration information or nlc.org for upcoming NLC events. Scan the QR code to view our Save the Date video.

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ALABAMA
LEAGUE
OF
MUNICIPALITIES

CAPITOL
JOURNAL

ALM

Trail Guides

Who is the Alabama League of Municipalities? Simply put, the Alabama League of Municipalities is your biggest ally - in city hall and the Alabama Legislature.

The Alabama League of Municipalities, often referred to as the "League," was formed at a time when municipal voices were being ignored, overlooked and dismissed. By the mid-1930s, a small cadre of participating mayors was driven by their sense of being powerless at the state level and resolved to create an organization that would become a true force to be reckoned with.

Meet Your Trail Guides

- League Leadership
- Board of Directors
- Standing Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs
- League Staff

What is the Alabama League of Municipalities?

The Alabama League of Municipalities is a nonpartisan membership association of over 450 incorporated cities and towns. Since 1935, the League has worked to strengthen municipal government through advocacy, training and the advancement of effective local leadership. As the recognized voice of Alabama's cities and towns, ALM's member municipalities benefit from a variety of member programs, services and activities that are impossible to accomplish alone.

Learn more about our amazing history by scanning the QR code.

Organization of the League

League leadership consists of officers (president and vice president), a board of directors, an executive committee and the executive director. The ALM Board of Directors is composed of five to seven elected municipal officials from each of the state's congressional districts and the ALM Executive Committee consists of the president, vice president, active past presidents still in office and the executive director (as an advisory, non-voting member). League officers and members of the board of directors are elected by the voting delegates at the annual convention. In addition, there is an ALM Committee on State and Federal Legislation composed of a chair and vice chair (elected by voting delegates at the annual convention), one member from each state senatorial district, the chair and vice chair of any standing committee established by the board of directors and not more than 12 members chosen from the state at-large. The executive director serves as an ex officio member of the committee.

Standing Committees

The League has six standing committees formed by the board of directors that convene each year in Montgomery to hear from state and federal resource advisors. Committee members then recommend any pertinent legislative considerations to the ALM Committee on State and Federal Legislation for the upcoming Regular Legislative Session. The League's six standing committees are: Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR); Energy, Environment and Natural Resources (EENR); Community and Economic Development (CED); Transportation, Infrastructure and Communication (TIC); Public Safety (PS); and Human Development (HD).

Learn more about each committee by scanning the QR code. Anyone interested in serving on a committee can email Lillian Pitman at *lpitman@almonline.org*.

Meet Your Trail Guides

Executive Team

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President and Vice President (2025 - 2026)

Mayor Sherry Sullivan
Fairhope
President

Mayor Rusty Jessup
Riverside
Vice President

Board of Directors (2025 - 2026)

From the First Congressional District

Mayor
Ralph Hellmich,
Foley

Councilmember
Katherine Breeden,
Loxley

Mayor
Mike McMillan,
Spanish Fort

Councilmember
Newton Cromer,
Saraland

Councilmember
Ruthie Campbell,
Robertsdale

From the Second Congressional District

Councilmember
Marché Johnson,
Montgomery

Mayor
Gordon Stone,
Pike Road

Mayor
Dexter McLendon,
Greenville

Mayor
Jason Reeves,
Troy

Mayor
Stanley Stallworth,
Evergreen

From the Third Congressional District

Mayor
Joe Taylor,
Rainbow City

Councilmember
Billy Pearson,
Lincoln

Mayor
Ron Anders,
Auburn

Councilmember
Michael Ellis,
LaFayette

Mayor
Scott Reeves,
Hokes Bluff

From the Fourth Congressional District

Councilmember
Jennifer Williams Smith,
Jasper

Mayor
Allen Dunavant,
Glen Allen

Mayor
Chuck Ables,
Geraldine

Mayor
Andrew Betterton,
Florence

Mayor
Mike Lockhart,
Muscle Shoals

Board of Directors (2025 - 2026)

From the Fifth Congressional District

Councilmember
Dana Henry,
Athens

Mayor
Gary Livingston,
Eva

Mayor
Jim McCamy,
Scottsboro

Councilmember
Tommy Perry,
Priceville

Councilmember
Connie Spears,
Madison

From the Sixth Congressional District

Mayor
Mike Oakley,
Centreville

Mayor
Ashley Curry,
Vestavia Hills

Mayor
Bobbie White,
Brent

Councilmember
Michael Gay,
Millbrook

Mayor
Theoangelo Perkins,
Harpersville

From the Seventh Congressional District

Mayor
Bobby Scott,
Center Point

Mayor
James Perkins Jr.,
Selma

Mayor
Gwendolyn Rogers,
Linden

Mayor
Brian Puckett,
Helena

Mayor
Sheldon Day,
Thomasville

Executive Committee Members (Active Past Presidents)

Councilmember
Johnny Ford,
Tuskegee
(1989-1990)

Mayor
Lew Watson,
Lincoln
(2006-2007)

Mayor
Charles Murphy,
Robertsdale
(2010-2011)

Mayor
Walt Maddox,
Tuscaloosa
(2013-2014)

Councilmember
Sadie Britt,
Lincoln
(2015-2016)

Mayor
Phil Segraves,
Guin
(2016)

Mayor
Howard Rubenstein,
Saraland
(2016-2018)

Mayor
Ronnie Marks,
Athens
(2019-2020)

Mayor
Leigh Dollar,
Guntersville
(2020-2021)

Mayor
Gary Fuller,
Opelika
(2021-2022)

Mayor
Lawrence "Tony" Haygood Jr.,
Tuskegee
(2022-2023)

Mayor
Randy Garrison,
Hartselle
(2023-2024)

Mayor
Mark Saliba,
Dothan
(2024-2025)

Standing Committee Chairs and Vice Chairs (2025-2026)

Committee on State and Federal Legislation

Chair: Councilmember Charles Black, Priceville
Vice Chair: Mayor Donna McKay, Wadley

Committee on Finance, Administration and Intergovernmental Relations (FAIR)

Chair: Councilmember Crystal Smitherman, Birmingham
Vice Chair: Mayor Stanley Allred, Millport

Committee on Energy, Environment and Natural Resources (EENR)

Chair: Councilmember Willis Thompson, Muscle Shoals
Vice Chair: Councilmember Melvin Duran, Priceville

Committee on Transportation, Infrastructure and Communication (TIC)

Chair: Councilmember Don Mack, Centreville
Vice Chair: Councilmember Eddie Smith, Opelika

Committee on Public Safety (PS)

Chair: Councilmember Wardine Alexander, Birmingham
Vice Chair: Councilmember Clark Hopper, Rainbow City

Committee on Human Development (HD)

Chair: Mayor Gayle Robbins, Florala
Vice Chair: Councilmember Kim M. Cain, Ashland

Committee on Community and Economic Development (CED)

Chair: Councilmember Newton Cromer, Saraland
Vice Chair: Councilmember Kathy Smyth, Luverne

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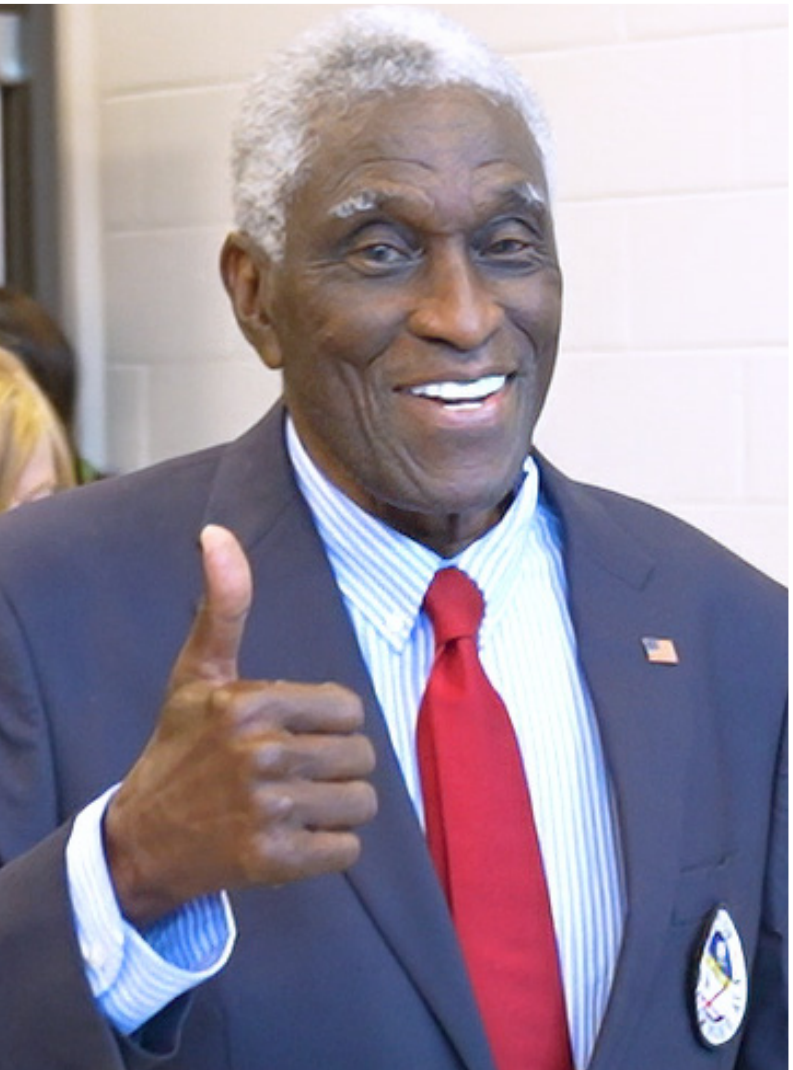
CITY HALL

AL REGISTRATION
CELEBRAT

ALM

DELEGATE
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE
DELEGATE



First Things First

Before embarking on any trip, one needs to make sure the reasons are clear, the path is correct and the goal is worthy. By running for office and committing yourself to public service, you have already decided that the goal is worthy. In the following pages, we have compiled a helpful guide for determining the reasons and the path. Some of it may be simplistic for those who have traveled this road before, but some of it may be brand new information. Either way, it is always good to, as the coaches say, get back to the basics!

Starting out, we have a checklist for new officials. This will help you get everything ready for your new role in municipal government. There are certain requirements above the municipal level that have to be satisfied - registration, state ethics commission training and municipal official training. Let us begin with a refresher on what, exactly, an Alabama municipality is and does.

- Why does my municipality matter?
- What is a municipality?
- Why create a municipality?
- What are the different forms of municipal government?
- What are the roles of the mayor, council, city manager and clerk?
- What is the difference between a council meeting and a public hearing?
- What is an ordinance?
- How does my municipality afford to provide essential services?

First Things First

- [x] **Win the race and get elected!**
- [ ] Complete state ethics training within 120 days of taking office
- [ ] Report final campaign expenses to the secretary of state, if applicable *Learn more at fcpa.alabamavotes.gov.*
- [ ] Attend first council meeting
- [ ] Set up official email address and send it to *MunicipalElections@almonline.org*
- [ ] Login to the ALM Member Portal to register for events or online training and to view transcripts
- [ ] Complete Statement of Economic Interest annually before April 30
- [ ] Alabama Municipal Official Training Act - Complete mandatory 40 hours/10 hours training per year by November 2029

Ethics Training

Statement of Economic Interest

Fair Campaign Practices Act

Alabama Municipal Official Training Act

Why does my municipality matter?

The best answer to this broad question is three words: Quality of Life! Very few people understand the true significance of municipal governance. It literally affects every aspect of our daily lives – from dogs, garbage, water and sewage to infrastructure, recreation, economic development and public safety. But what exactly is a municipality and how do they function in Alabama?

What is a municipality?

A municipality is a community of people operating under a form of government. In Alabama, municipalities are limited by the state legislature as to what they can and cannot do. Municipal governance is carried out by locally-elected people. In Alabama, municipalities are classified according to their population – or the number of people who live within the municipal limits. Municipalities with a population less than 2,000 are considered towns. Municipalities with a population more than 2,000 are considered cities.

Why create a municipality?

Two key reasons a group of citizens may want to create a municipality is to protect the identity of a local community and for the services a municipality can provide for the people who live and work within the municipality. The following list is a general description of some of the vital public services a municipality may provide to its residents. Keep in mind, however, that municipalities are not required to provide all these services.

What are the different forms of municipal government?

There are two forms of municipal government in the state of Alabama: mayor-council and council-manager.

The mayor-council form of government is found in most Alabama municipalities and consists of a mayor and five to seven councilmembers. Mayors and councilmembers are elected by municipal citizens to serve four-year terms.

The governing body of a municipality organized under the council-manager form of government also consists of an elected mayor and council. However, the big difference is that the council appoints a manager who serves as the chief administrator for the municipality who performs many of the duties performed by the mayor in a mayor-council form of government.

Vital Public Services

The public services offered in a municipality vary widely based on need, ability and tax revenue, among other reasons. They all add up to a place that people want to live, work and raise families.

- Police or fire protection services for the people and property of the community - Fire protection not only protects property, but often results in lower insurance rates for property owners
- Public works programs
- Schools
- Street construction and maintenance
- Sidewalk construction and maintenance
- Parks and recreation facilities
- Airports, museums, zoos, hospitals, curb markets, etc.
- Sewer systems, both sanitary and storm
- Street lighting
- Flood control projects
- Utilities: construction, maintenance and operation of water, gas, sewer and electric systems
- Economic development
- Community financing
- Grant programs
- Planning and zoning; balancing property rights with the need to have orderly development and property value protection
- Garbage collection and disposal services

What is the role of the mayor?

In mayor-council municipalities, regardless of population, the mayor serves as the chief executive officer of the municipality and is charged with overseeing the day-to-day administration of the municipality and carrying out the policies adopted by the council.

In municipalities with a population less than 12,000, the mayor is a member of the council and presides over all meetings of the council.

At his or her discretion, the mayor may vote as a member of the council on any issue coming to a vote. However, if the mayor does not vote and the resulting vote of the council ends in a tie, then the law requires the mayor to vote to break the tie.

The mayor of a mayor-council municipality with a population of 12,000 or more has the same powers and duties as the mayor of a smaller municipality with the exception that he or she is not a member of the council and does not vote. However, all ordinances of a general and permanent nature approved by the council are subject to the veto power of the mayor. (The mayor can reject the decision or proposal made by the council.)

What is the role of the council?

The municipal council is the local legislative body which has the responsibility of determining the policies to be followed in the administration of the municipal government. In almost every instance where state law grants authority to municipalities, that authority must be exercised through action by the council.

In municipalities with a population of 12,000 or more, the president of the council presides over council meetings. The president of the council is a member of the council and is entitled to vote on issues coming before the council. In case of a tie vote, the measure fails for lack of the required majority.

What is the role of the city manager?

In those municipalities that have appointed a city manager, the city manager serves as the head of the administrative branch of the municipal government and is responsible to the council for the proper administration of all affairs of the municipality. The council has the power to appoint and remove a city manager.

What is the role of the municipal clerk?

Municipalities are required by state law to have a municipal clerk, and he or she has very specific responsibilities. The clerk is the bridge between the council and the mayor and between city hall and the public. In addition to keeping up with rules and regulations, preparing council minutes and maintaining financial records, the clerk is often the most direct link between residents and government. The city clerk's role is one of the oldest and most important public servant professions.

What is the difference between a council meeting and a public hearing?

A council meeting is when a majority of the councilmembers (known as a quorum) and the mayor gather at a designated place and time to discuss, deliberate and conduct city or town business. While smaller municipalities with a population under 2,000 are only required to have one council meeting per month, all other municipalities are required to hold two council meetings per month to conduct municipal business, such as passing ordinances.

The Open Meetings Act requires the council to give notice of the time, place and purpose of council meetings to the public so that citizens can also attend. Keep in mind that a council meeting is a business meeting, not a public hearing. The meeting is open to the public not so much to obtain citizen input, but to allow the public to observe the business of government to ensure they, the citizens, are appropriately represented by their elected

officials. Although most councils do set aside a time for public comment, Alabama law does not guarantee citizens the right to speak at a council meeting.

Unlike a council meeting, a public hearing is a special meeting of the council for the purpose of receiving input and testimony from the public on a particular issue or proposed action. In limited instances, Alabama law requires that before a council takes action on certain issues, they must receive public input by holding a public hearing. For example, before a council takes action on establishing zoning or rezoning, the law requires they hold a public hearing.

What is an ordinance?

An ordinance is an official action of the council regulating the community at large. A violation of an ordinance could result in a penalty.

How does a municipality afford to provide essential services?

In order to provide citizens with the essential services everyone expects, the city or town must have revenue. Municipalities generate revenue by creating and collecting a variety of taxes and licenses as well as permit and franchise fees (a fee imposed as a condition for using public streets and right of ways for private and public benefit).

Generally speaking, municipalities have authority to establish and collect sales and use taxes, business license taxes, gasoline taxes, tobacco taxes, amusement taxes, lodgings taxes, property taxes and occupational license taxes. Keep in mind that not every municipality assesses all of these taxes even though they have the authority to do so.

In addition to taxes, municipalities also have the authority to establish inspection fees for building, fire, plumbing and electrical inspections. These fees help offset the cost of providing for the inspections which help protect public safety.

While nobody likes to pay taxes, it is important to understand that the monies collected by your municipality fund vital public services like police and fire protection, parks and recreation, street and road maintenance, schools, water, sewer and garbage collection.

Ken Smith
Former Executive Director
Alabama League of
Municipalities
Brenda Smith
Guest

Setting Out

No journey should be embarked upon unless all of the planning has been done with the correct information. Good information can be the difference between a great adventure and a near disaster.

In this next section, we highlight a few of the many League presentations on various facets of municipal governance, everything from who can do the hiring and firing to how money can be spent from the municipal purse. Of course, it must all be underpinned by serious reflection on the ethical responsibilities of a municipal official.

Legal Department - A User's Guide

Selected Readings for the Municipal Official

- Fundamentals of Municipal Government
- Laws Governing Officers and Employees
- Revenues and Expenditures
- Municipal Regulatory Powers
- Property Controls
- Streets and Roads
- Public Safety
- Municipal Courts
- Liability, Safety and Risk Management

Alabama Ethics Commission

The Legal Department - A User's Guide

One of the League's most important functions is responding to legal inquiries from its member municipalities. The League employs three full-time attorneys to provide its members with direct legal assistance when needed. While the legal department has many roles, with over 450 members—representing literally thousands of officials, employees, board members and others who may make requests—there are limits to what the department can do. This article will help readers make the most effective use of the legal department. It is intended simply as a guide, and should be read that way. Because our goal is to serve our member municipalities, League attorneys attempt to remain flexible in the services they provide.

What Services Are Available?

The legal department's primary function is to represent the interests of member municipalities throughout Alabama. Therefore, we attempt to have an attorney available by telephone every day during regular business hours. However, the Legal department is not a substitute for local legal representation. The volume of requests we receive makes individual representation impossible. Therefore, we have to restrict our activities to those which we feel best serve all our member cities and towns.

In addition to providing direct legal assistance, the Legal department provides other services, such as: preparation of amicus curiae (friend of the court) briefs in appellate cases; preparation of monthly summaries of court decisions and attorney general's opinions for the League magazine and the League Law program; monthly legal articles in *The Alabama Municipal Journal*; drafting manuals explaining the duties and responsibilities of municipal officials and employees; providing sample and model ordinances; conducting educational and training seminars; managing the Alabama Association of Municipal Attorneys; and assisting with the League's lobbying efforts.

Who Can Inquire?

This question raises complex ethical conflicts of interest issues concerning the responsibilities of the League's attorneys. Explaining it simply, the League represents its member municipalities and not individuals, even if they are municipal officials.

The League answers inquiries from mayors, councilmembers, board members, clerks, attorneys and other representatives of member municipalities. League attorneys do not advise officials about their private legal matters. Additionally, conflict of interest rules generally prohibit us from advising members of the public regarding municipal legal matters, although we do share articles or other general information we have on hand with private citizens. Please do not encourage citizens who are not municipal officials or employees to contact the League for legal advice.

Further, the League's attorneys cannot take sides in disputes involving one municipality against another or in conflicts between municipal officials. League attorneys exercise discretion in these situations and will generally refer you to your local attorney when a potential conflict of interest appears likely to arise. If it appears that we are being asked to resolve a dispute between two or more officials, we may ask that the question be reduced to writing so that we may respond to all sides jointly. We will also make every effort to encourage cooperation on questions involving disputes between municipal officials.

How to Use the Legal Department

Whether you inquire by letter, telephone, email or fax, the following guidelines will help us give you the most prompt, accurate response:

- Call or write as soon as possible after identifying your problem;
- Give us as many facts as possible. On questions involving boards, it is best to know under what section of the Alabama Code the board was created;
- If you are following up on an issue you have been discussing with one of our staff members, please advise the receptionist so that your call may be directed to that staff member;
- If you are under a deadline, let us know what it is and we will try our best to meet it;
- Municipal officials and employees are welcome to discuss matters in person at League headquarters in Montgomery. Please call in advance to make an appointment. If your questions involve a review of documents, we may ask that they be forwarded in advance of the meeting so that we may review them.

Links to More Legal Publications

Handbook for Mayors and Councilmembers

Selected Readings for the Municipal Official

Legal Publications and Resources

Selected Readings for the Municipal Official

Since the Alabama League of Municipalities was formed in 1935, certain questions are asked again and again. Every municipal administration seeks advice on questions relating to council organization, parliamentary procedure, basic municipal powers, territorial jurisdiction, revenue powers, municipal courts and a number of other pertinent issues. The League's legal team has compiled a collection of Selected Readings articles that is constantly being updated to reflect Alabama's current laws and state of affairs. These articles should prove helpful to newly-elected Alabama municipal officials in the orientation process and to veteran municipal officials as a reference on municipal government. It should be emphasized that the collection of articles is not intended to be an exhaustive study of every possible scenario that may play out in municipal government, nor are they the definitive "last word" on any of the subjects. However, they are a great beginning point to become familiar with the unique ways in which municipal government works as the government closest to its citizens. There are many *Selected Readings for the Municipal Official* that cover multiple aspects of municipal government. The outline below is merely a list of the subjects covered. For complete articles, scan the QR code above.

Fundamentals of Municipal Government

How does a municipal government work? Who speaks and when? There are many jobs and responsibilities associated with the various roles in running a city or town. The best way to keep it all straightforward is to have certain rules that everyone must follow. That way, everyone is on the same page, there is a sense of order and expectations of outcomes are clear.

- Forms of Municipal Government in Alabama
- General Powers of Municipalities
- Duties of the Mayor and Council
- The Municipal Police Jurisdiction
- Council Meeting Procedure
- The Council and Public Participation
- Basic Parliamentary Procedure
- The Open Meetings Act
- Keeping the Journal
- Municipal Ordinances
- Tips for Drafting Ordinances
- Presumptions
- Public Records
- Municipal Boards in Alabama
- Working with Municipal Boards
- Municipal Contracts
- State Regulated Professions and Licensing Requirements
- Economic and Industrial Development
- Commercial Development Authorities
- Solid Waste Collection and Disposal
- Municipalities and Recreation

Laws Governing Officers and Employees

- Conflicting Offices and Interests
- Expenses of Municipal Officers and Employees
- Military Leave for Municipal Employees
- State Mandated Training for Municipal Personnel

Revenues and Expenditures

- The Municipal Budget and Auditing Processes
- Sources of Revenue for Alabama Cities and Towns
- State Collected and Distributed Local Revenue and State Taxes Paid by Municipalities
- Municipalities and State Shared Fuel Taxes and Inspection Fees
- Municipal Sales Tax in Alabama
- License Schedule Ordinance
- License Exemptions and Limitations
- Due Process Issues in Licensing
- License Enforcement
- The Commerce Clause and Municipal Taxation
- The Special Federal Census
- Municipal Franchises
- Municipal Debt Financing
- Sale or Lease of Unneeded Municipal Property
- Authority to Expend Municipal Funds
- The Public Purpose Doctrine
- Paying Legal Expenses of Officers and Employees
- The Competitive Bid Law
- Public Works Bidding

Municipal Regulatory Powers

- Municipalities and the First Amendment
- Control of Solicitors and Peddlers
- Abatement of Nuisances
- Regulation of Alcoholic Beverages
- Municipal Animal Control
- Control of Junkyard and Salvage Operations

Property Controls

- Annexation and De-annexation of Municipal Property
- Zoning in Alabama
- Regulation of Subdivisions
- The Vested Rights Doctrine

- The Power to Condemn
- Dedication of Lands
- Adoption of Municipal Standard Codes and Ordinances by Reference

Streets and Roads

- Streets, Alleys and Sidewalks
- Vacation of Streets

Public Safety

- Municipal Fire Protection
- The Municipal Police Force
- Ethics and the Liability of Off-Duty Police Officers
- Jails
- Emergency Management and Preparedness
- Advance Planning for Civil Disturbances

Municipal Courts

- The Municipal Court
- Magistrates and the Duty of Impartiality
- Adoption of State Offenses by Reference

Liability, Safety and Risk Management

- Municipal Liability
- Risk Management: Avoiding and Reducing Municipal Tort Liability
- Municipalities and The Workers Compensation Law
- Volunteers in Municipal Government

Alabama Ethics Commission

The Alabama Ethics Commission was created by the Alabama Legislature in 1973 by Act No. 1056. The mission of the commission is to ensure that public officials are independent and impartial; that decisions and policies are made in the proper governmental channels; that public office is not used for private gain; and, most importantly, that there is public confidence in the integrity of government.

The commission generally deals with issues involving conflicts of interest, or the use of office for personal gain, on the part of public officials and public employees in Alabama. The commission does this through both its opinions process and its enforcement process.

A public official is "any person elected to public office, whether or not that person has taken office, by the vote of the people at state, county, or municipal level of government or their instrumentalities, including governmental corporations, and any person appointed to a position at the state, county, or municipal level of government or their instrumentalities, including governmental corporations. A public official includes the chairs and vice-chairs or the equivalent offices of each state political party as defined in Section 17-13-40." Ala. Code § 36-25-1(27).

A "public employee" is any person employed at the state, county or municipal level of government or their instrumentalities, including governmental corporations and authorities, but excluding employees of hospitals or other health care corporations including contract employees of those hospitals or other health care corporations, who is paid in whole or in part from state, county or municipal funds. A public employee does not include a person employed on a part-time basis whose employment is limited to providing professional services other than lobbying, the compensation for which constitutes less than 50% of the part-time employee's income. Ala. Code § 36-25-1(26).

Public officials and public employees may not use their official position to benefit their "family members" or businesses with which they are associated. "Lobbyists" and "Principals" are subject to many provisions of the Alabama Ethics Act, as well.

The commission's website is a trove of useful information regarding this foundational subject of municipal governance and deserves thorough research. More information can be found at the addresses below.

- Alabama Ethics Commission FAQs - *https://ethics.alabama.gov/faq.aspx*
- Public Official Ethics Education - *https://ethics.alabama.gov/education.aspx*
- Pre-Certification of Allowed Activities - *https://ethics.alabama.gov/precertifications.aspx*
- Statement of Economic Interests - *https://ethics.alabama.gov/soei.aspx*
- Public Records - *https://ethics.alabama.gov/search/SearchLinks.aspx*
- Law and Rules - *https://ethics.alabama.gov/law.aspx*

WILLIS
THOMPSON
COUNCIL MEMBER
MUSCLE SHOALS, AL
MIKE
LOCKHART
MAYOR
MUSCLE SHOALS, AL

Paths to Success

Why are you holding this book in your hand right now? Because many years ago a group of municipal officials got together to stand up for themselves and formed the Alabama League of Municipalities. Commonly referred to as "the League," we have proudly served as the voice of Alabama's municipalities since 1935. In that time, the League has grown from only advocacy to an entire association of financial programs, educational programs, legal services and quality-of-life programs. Scan the accompanying QR codes for more information about each of these programs.

Certified Municipal Official Program

Certified Municipality Achievement Award

ALM Affiliate Programs -

- Municipal Revenue Service
- Municipal Workers Compensation Fund
- Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation
- AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division
- Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation
- Municipal Intercept Services

Economic Development Academy

Alabama Communities of Excellence

Live Locally Alabama

Certified Municipal Official Program

In 1994, ALM established its **Certified Municipal Official** (CMO) training program, an educational service provided to mayors and councilmembers who wish to receive formal training in municipal government. Credit hours are earned by attending League CMO sessions as well as other League-approved training, National League of Cities (NLC) conferences or through service on League committees and boards. Credit is also awarded for attendance at other approved events.

Alabama Municipal Official Training Act - Act 2024-194

The Certified Municipal Official (CMO) program offers municipal government training in one-day and multiday events and online training designed for elected municipal officials – mayors and councilmembers – to comply with the Alabama Municipal Official Training Act, which was signed into law on May 3, 2024. In accordance with Alabama Act 2024-194, all mayors and councilmembers MUST complete 10 hours of training annually for a total of 40 hours during their first term in office beginning January 1, 2025. Officials must complete a core curriculum (see core curriculum list, opposite page) of 20 hours comprised of 20 specific trainings from an approved list and 20 additional hours of approved training to complete the basic certification. Officials who have already earned the basic CMO designation (40 hours) are required to earn five credit hours per year.

Officials who earn 40 credit hours in the program are awarded the **Certified Municipal Official** designation.

With an additional 40 credit hours, officials receive the **Advanced Certified Municipal Official** designation.

A third designation, **CMO Emeritus**, recognizes mayors and councilmembers who have excelled beyond the requirements of the basic and Advanced CMO programs. CMO Emeritus levels II - IV were created for members who receive over 200 credit hours of training, and 20 points. This expanded recognition of achievement celebrates the lifelong dedication to learning displayed by Alabama's municipal officials.

Tiered Emeritus Level Recognitions:	
CMO Emeritus	120 credit hours and 15 points
CMO Emeritus II	200+ credit hours and 20 points
CMO Emeritus III	300+ credit hours and 30 points
CMO Emeritus IV	400+ credit hours and 40 points

What are emeritus points?

Each in-person event listed below is eligible for one emeritus point. Upon completion of one of the qualifying events, an official is awarded one point toward their emeritus certification. Up to six points per year can be earned. All other training events are eligible for credit hours only.

- ALM Standing Committee Membership and Meeting Attendance
- Attendance at the ALM Convention
- Attendance at the NLC City Summit
- Attendance at the NLC Congressional City Conference
- Attendance at the Municipal Legislative Advocacy Session and Meeting with Legislators
- Attendance at the Municipal Leadership Institute

Approved Core Curriculum Courses Checklist	
☐ Annexation and De-annexation of Municipal Property	☐ Public Records
☐ Authority to Expend Municipal Funds	☐ Public Works Bidding
☐ Ethics	☐ Sources of Revenue for Alabama Cities and Towns
☐ Conflicting Offices and Interests	☐ The Competitive Bid Law
☐ Parliamentary Procedure/Council Meeting Procedure	☐ The Municipal Auditing Process
☐ Duties of Mayor and Council	☐ The Municipal Budget Process
☐ General Powers of Municipalities	☐ The Open Meetings Act
☐ Legislative Advocacy	☐ The Public Purpose Doctrine
☐ Municipal Liability	☐ Working with Municipal Boards
☐ Police and Planning Jurisdiction	☐ Zoning in Alabama

Certified Municipality Achievement Award

The Certified Municipality Achievement Award is an annual award from the CMO Program created to recognize and commend cities and towns where the mayor and all councilmembers have earned the professional designation of Certified Municipal Official thereby distinguishing the municipality as a Certified Municipality. This designation represents the mayor and all councilmembers have completed a minimum of 40 credit hours of formal training on municipal government conducted or endorsed by the Alabama League of Municipalities. Qualifying municipalities are selected by the Alabama League of Municipalities based on Certified Municipal Official Program credit hour records during the previous calendar year. Qualifying municipalities receive a certificate and an annual Certified Municipality Achievement Award digital seal for their municipal website.

Path to Success Rating: ★★★★★

"You know one of the things that I think is great with the CMO program is that each year there are new issues that come up, whether that's legislative issues or new laws that come out that we have to be on top of. So, if you don't go to some of these CMO classes, you are not able to keep up with it as well."

~ Mayor Mark Saliba, Dothan, Immediate Past League President

Links to Certified Municipal Official Information

CMO Webpage | CMO FAQs | Online Training | Member Portal | Upcoming Training

Municipal Revenue Service

One of the League's earliest services formed to address a municipal need, the Municipal Revenue Service was formed in 1942 to provide necessary investigations to collect unpaid and escaped delinquent insurance license taxes from insurance companies doing business in Alabama's municipalities.

Municipal Workers Compensation Fund

The Municipal Workers Compensation Fund (MWCF) was established by the Alabama League of Municipalities in 1976 and is the second oldest League insurance pool in the nation. With nearly 600 participating municipal entities – 80% of the Alabama League's membership – MWCF is a member-owned, group self-insurance pool that provides a direct means for cities and towns to save on workers compensation costs. Any municipality or separate legal entity created under the powers of the municipality (such as a utility board or housing authority) or any state agency organized under statutory authority of the state of Alabama is eligible for membership.

MWCF members experience substantial benefits from cost containment programs that significantly reduce the expense of medical benefits paid, thus lowering the cost of member premiums. The MWCF staff, which includes in-house legal counsel, has extensive knowledge of workers compensation claims in Alabama. MWCF's Board of Directors consists solely of five veteran municipal elected officials and is a nonprofit government insuring entity.

Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation

In 1986, Time Magazine's cover story highlighted the collapse of the commercial liability insurance market in the United States; a change that significantly impacted cities and towns across Alabama. Because of their loyalty and dedication to local government, Perry Roquemore Jr., who served as executive director of the Alabama League of Municipalities at the time, and Harold Swearingen, past ALM president and Pine Hill mayor, saw this not only as a challenge, but also as an opportunity to create a stable insurance market for Alabama's cities and towns through the creation of a risk pool or insurance company that would provide a reliable and stable source of insurance.

In its first year of operation, AMIC wrote $2 million of premium and approximately 180 policies. By 1998, AMIC had grown to approximately $9 million of premium and, true to its promise, paid its first dividend to those capitalized members that took that leap of faith back in 1988.

Over the past 35 years, AMIC has grown to become the premier provider of property and casualty insurance for public entities in Alabama and those capitalized members have received more than $18 million in dividends on their investment! AMIC's original mission of Insuring the Future of Local Government remains unchanged.

AMIC/MWCF Loss Control Division

In 2002, MWCF teamed with the Alabama Municipal Insurance Corporation (AMIC) to create a joint Loss Control Division allowing both programs to provide additional staff and expanded services at a much reduced member expense.

The Loss Control Division has 11 dedicated staff members and offers exclusive, state-of-the-art training such as the SKIDCAR defensive driving course and the Firearms Training System (FATS). Both of these programs were designed to create greater awareness of ongoing liability issues as well as teach member participants to eliminate or mitigate their losses through specialized training.

AMIC/MWCF's Loss Control Division provides a variety of risk management services to its members including:

- On-site Risk Management with follow-up reports and recommendations
- Specialized Law Enforcement Risk Control
- Online Training with LocalGovU
- Loss Analysis and Trending
- Newsletters and Bulletins
- Reference Documents
- Employment Practices Law Hotline
- Proactive Driver Training (SKIDCAR)
- Firearms Training System (FATS)
- Safety DVD Library
- Safety Seminars

Loss Control Website

SKIDCAR

FATS

Alabama Municipal Funding Corporation

AMFund was developed by the Alabama League of Municipalities to assist Alabama's cities and towns in funding local projects, equipment purchases and refinancing existing debt. The purpose of AMFund is to provide timely, low-cost, direct bank debt financing to fund almost any size municipal project.

Municipal Leagues in a number of other states, including Kentucky, Florida, Georgia and Tennessee, operate similar programs for their members. As with these programs, AMFund is able to take advantage of the economies of scale, allowing municipalities to:

- Receive competitive, fixed rate debt financing regardless of project size.
- Significantly reduce borrowers' transaction costs.
- Minimize staff time by using straightforward, direct bank debt loan documentation.

Thornton Farish Inc. serves as AMFund's financial advisor to assist municipalities in AMFund's direct bank debt financing process.

Our AMFund team is ready to assist you with any questions you may have. All inquiries are completely confidential.

Municipal Intercept Services

In 2014, the Alabama Legislature enacted an amendment allowing municipalities and counties to attempt to collect delinquent debts owed to them by collecting this debt from an individual's state tax refund. This is a process that has been in force for many years for several state agencies, but until 2014, it was not possible for municipalities or counties. As part of this amendment, the Alabama Department of Revenue agreed to process these debts through only two clearinghouse entities: the Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM) for municipal entities and the Association of County Commissions of Alabama (ACCA) for county entities. In 2015, the Alabama League of Municipalities formed Municipal Intercept Services, LLC (MIS) as its clearinghouse entity to act as a conduit between participating Alabama municipalities and the Alabama Department of Revenue (ADOR).

MIS is NOT a debt collection agency or service. MIS does not do what debt collection services do and debt collection services cannot offer what MIS does. MIS is a unique way to attempt to recover money owed to your municipality by "intercepting" an individual's Alabama state tax refund. Debt collection agencies CANNOT offer you this service. NOTE: If the debtor is not eligible for an Alabama state tax refund, no money can be collected.

Only municipal entities within Alabama are eligible to use the MIS system. This includes cities, towns, certain utility boards, housing authorities and hospitals.

Economic Development Academy

ALM's Economic Development Academy was launched in 2021 and is specifically designed to educate and engage municipal officials on the essential elements and phases of economic development while highlighting their vital role in economic initiatives and projects within their communities.

Developed in conjunction with the Alabama Community College System (ACCS) and supported by an advisory council of industry leaders, the EDA engages elected officials from select cities and towns with municipal peers and colleagues from their region to prepare their communities for growth. Using a collaborative municipal team approach, participants convene four times throughout the year to complete assignments and develop strategies to enhance economic development in their communities. Ultimately, each municipality selected is required to implement a community program/project and to report on its progress. Academy graduates are recognized during the ALM's annual Municipal Leadership Institute each fall with a certification via ACCS and ALM.

While only municipal officials and municipal employees are eligible to receive CMO credit, business leaders and regional economic developers are welcome to participate in the program. All participants will receive a certificate from the Alabama Community College System upon completion.

Path to Success Rating: ★★★★★

"EDA has positively impacted our decision-making process by providing us with the tools to help us strategically make decisions. The program transformed us from being reactive to boldly proactive, equipping us with data-driven approaches while never losing sight of the human element."

~ James D. Stewart Jr., Irondale, Mayor

Alabama Communities of Excellence

The Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) program was established in 2002 and became a League program in 2022. ACE is a 501(c)(3) organization that provides technical assistance to select communities with populations ranging from 2,000 to 18,000 in an effort to strengthen long-term economic success. Through a comprehensive, three-phase approach, ACE uses the collective expertise of its partner organizations – ranging from state agencies and associations to banks, utilities, universities and others – to foster unique community development programs.

The Alabama Communities of Excellence (ACE) program offers a systematic approach with the necessary technical resources and tools to help Alabama's small cities promote growth and prosperity by focusing on their distinctive assets and resources. ACE understands the uniqueness of each community, recognizing that every city has different assets, values, concerns and priorities.

Communities interested in participating in the ACE program must apply for consideration. Candidates for the ACE program are selected using a competitive application process. At the beginning of each selection process, applications are disseminated to the mayors of those communities having the qualifying population of 2,000 to 18,000.

Path to Success Rating: ★★★★★

"ACE helped unite city and corporate leaders, business owners and economic developers around major projects like the 17 Springs project, which would not be possible without this collaboration and cooperation. That public-private partnership was only possible because of the groundwork laid through ACE's collaboration model."

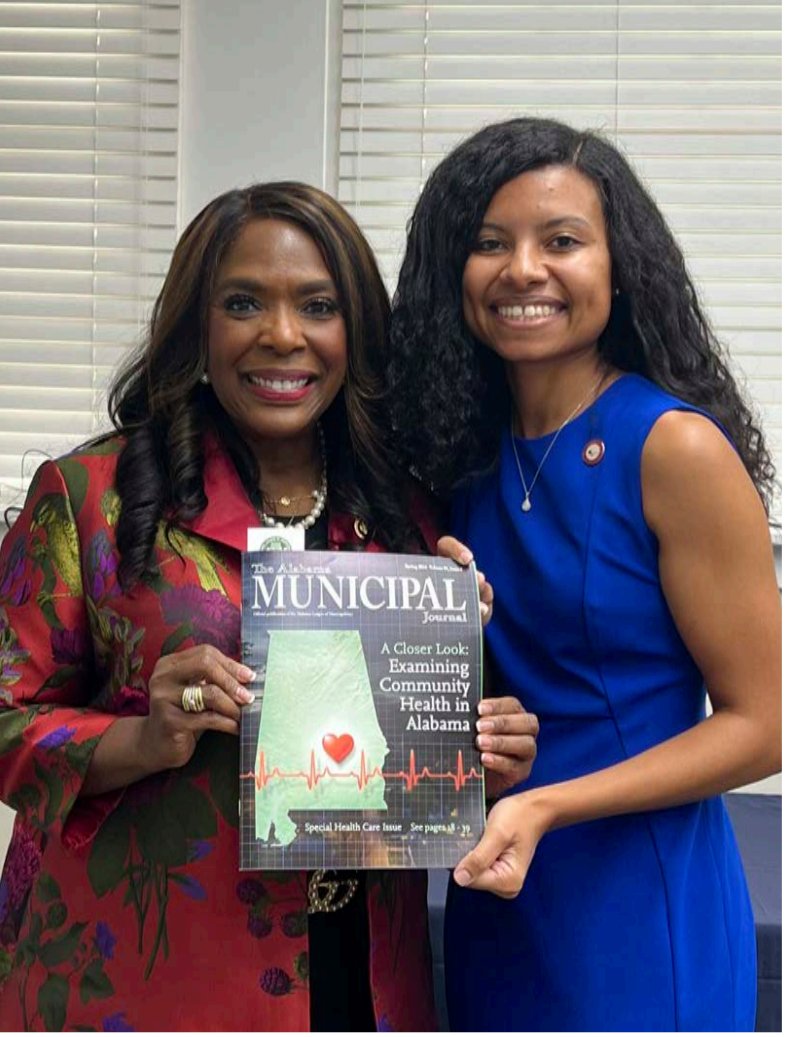
~ Ann Harper, Millbrook, Director of Economic Development

Live Locally Alabama

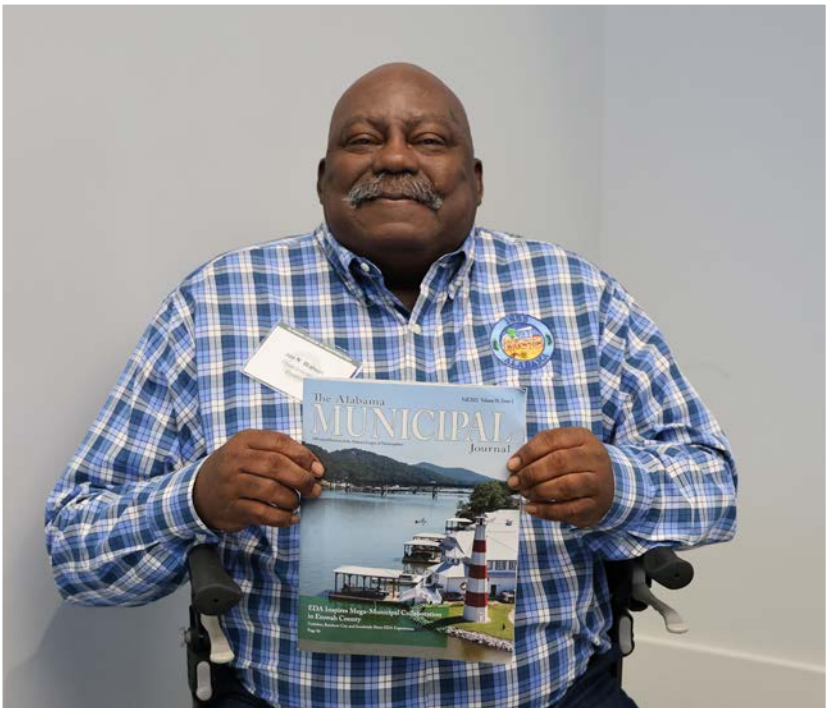
In 2024, the League launched Live Locally Alabama on behalf of Alabama's municipal leaders. The goal of this quality-of-life campaign is to encourage civic engagement, instill community pride and highlight the crucial role municipal government plays in the daily lives of Alabama's citizens.

Alabama is made up of 466 cities and towns of various sizes, each with their own strengths and challenges. The campaign aims to provide strategic resources and one-on-one consultations for municipalities to help them improve how they showcase their uniqueness and remind citizens of the quality-of-life services they provide.

A major component of this campaign is ensuring our members have ready-to-use marketing assets to accomplish the aforementioned goal. This includes materials such as graphics, videos, press releases, a logo style guide, a strategic plan and more. These items can be used as is or tailored to include imagery or messaging unique to your individual communities.


The Alabama
MUNICIPAL
Journal
A Closer Look:
Examining
Community
Health in
Alabama
Special Health Care Issue

2024 ADVOCACY DAY
LEGISLATIVE
ISSUES GUIDE


The Alabama
MUNICIPAL
Journal

Landmarks & Beacons

The League has been a source of training for municipal officials since 1935. We continue that nearly-century-old mission of maintaining a library of materials and a full schedule of events, all aimed at preparing officials for competent public service. The League staff prepares numerous books, information bulletins and special reports on specific subjects of interest to municipal officials. The training and networking opportunities offer education and foster community with fellow municipal officials around the state and around the country.

Publications

- *The Alabama Municipal Journal*
- *Municipal Resources Guide*
- *Municipal Reporting Guide*
- *Handbook for Mayors and Councilmembers*
- *Selected Readings for the Municipal Official*
- *State House Advocate*
- *This Week from the League*

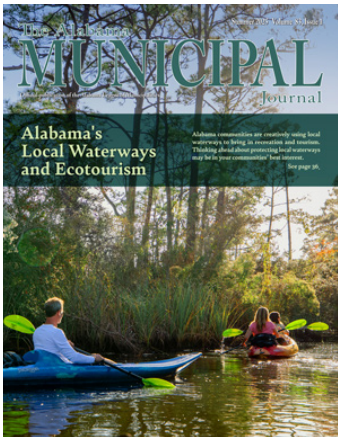
League Training Events

- Annual Convention - Spring
- Municipal Leadership Institute - Fall
- CMO Regional Training - February - July
- Advocacy Day - Around the start of the Legislative Session
- Orientation Training Sessions - Every four years
- Congressional Luncheons by District - Usually Summer

NLC Training Events

- NLC Congressional City Conference - Washington, D.C., usually March
- NLC City Summit - Usually late Fall

Publications



The Alabama Municipal Journal

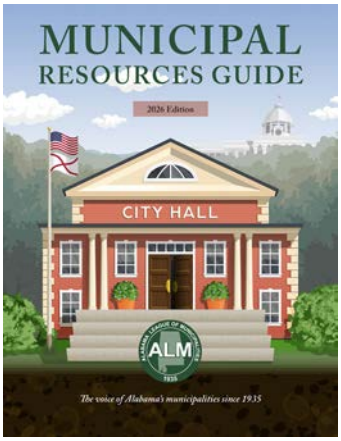
The League publishes *The Alabama Municipal Journal*, a magazine which annually provides more than 250 pages of timely information on the operation of city and town governments. *The Alabama Municipal Journal* is mailed to all elected officials and to top administrative and legal personnel of member 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 stakeholders. The total circulation of the magazine is approximately 4,500.

Path to Success Rating:
★★★★★

"This guide is THE resource for your city. Every one of your elected officials needs a copy, as well as your department heads and city clerk. Anyone tasked with managing a city or town in the state of Alabama has a need for the infinite amount of information and resources available in this wonderful little booklet."

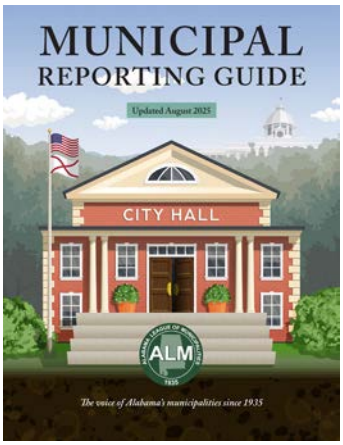
~ Mayor Rusty Jessup, Riverside,
League Vice-President

Municipal Resources Guide



As part of the mission to support our members, the League created the *Municipal Resources Guide* as a one stop guide to navigating the dozens of resources Alabama provides for local governments across several state agencies. While this guide does not include all the information about a program, it does provide an overview of valuable resources including program description, matching requirements, contact information and deadlines. This is also a living document that will be continually updated as municipal officials and employees endeavor to strengthen their communities.

Municipal Reporting Guide



Alabama's state laws require local governments to provide annual reports on several specific municipal operations. As a part of our mission to support our members, the League created this one stop guide to ensure our municipalities are aware of such requirements and can maintain transparency with their citizens. While this guide does not include all the information about each law, it does provide an overview of the requirements, contact information and deadlines. This is also a living document that will be continually updated as new laws are enacted each session.

Path to Success Rating: ★★★★★

"Over the past several years, municipalities have faced an increasing number of legislative requirements related to reporting. This guide is designed to help towns and cities stay on top of those deadlines—many of which carry financial penalties or other consequences that can significantly impact our communities. Whether you serve a small town or a large city, this resource guide is a valuable tool to ensure compliance and avoid unnecessary consequences."

~ Mayor Sherry Sullivan, Fairhope, League President

Handbook for Mayors and Councilmembers

The *Handbook for Mayors and Councilmembers* is intended to answer basic questions confronting mayors and councilmembers and help them perform their duties with confidence. Materials in this handbook are taken principally from the Alabama Constitution, 1901, the Code of Alabama 1975, acts of the Alabama Legislature, opinions of the courts of Alabama, rulings of the Alabama Ethics Commission and rulings of the attorney general. In addition to these references, comments based upon years of League experience are included when appropriate. However, the book is not intended to take the place of actual statutory provisions, court decisions or the advice of the municipal attorney.

Selected Readings for the Municipal Official

This has been referenced previously in this publication. However, just as the questions keep coming up, the reference to their answers must also continue to come up. Spend some time reviewing our catalog of Selected Readings by scanning the QR code.

State House Advocate

Stay engaged by reading our weekly e-newsletter, *State House Advocate*, during the legislative session. Our advocacy team shares a weekly update about the latest activity on the many proposals being considered by lawmakers. Past editions of the *State House Advocate* can be viewed on the League's website. As a member, you are automatically added to the mailing list. If you are not receiving the e-newsletters, contact Annabel Patton, Membership Clerk, to inquire.

This Week from the League

This Week from the League is a weekly e-newsletter that presents upcoming events, news around the state and other opportunities aimed at our member municipalities. This is where we will announce and review ALM events, grant notifications, upcoming or pending non-League events and workshops that are of interest to our audience. As a member, you are automatically added to the mailing list. If you are not receiving the e-newsletters, contact Annabel Patton, Membership Clerk, to inquire.

League Training Events

Events are published on our Training Calendar page. Scan this QR code to view the most up-to-date list of events and make plans to engage with the League!

Annual Convention

Each spring, ALM hosts its annual convention and expo providing timely informational sessions, access to municipal vendors and state agencies as well as outstanding networking opportunities for municipal officials and employees.

This multi-day event is the largest event hosted by the League and is carefully planned to maximize the time and attention of attendees. New League leadership is also elected each year at the annual business session held during convention.

Municipal Leadership Institute

The League's Municipal Leadership Institute (MLI) is held each year in the late fall. Agendas are developed to address opportunities and challenges faced by Alabama's cities and towns and feature statewide and regional experts, thought leaders and League staff as well as a networking reception and ample time with vendors and exhibitors. Additionally, the League recognizes graduates from the CMO, CMA, ACE and EDA programs in addition to several other affiliated programs.

Advocacy Day

The League's annual Legislative Advocacy Day is specifically designed to allow municipal officials the opportunity to share their ideas and concerns with Alabama's political leaders. Held near the beginning of each legislative session, this day-long event features legislative leadership panels, updates from various state agencies, an overview of the upcoming session from the League's advocacy team and a networking reception with state lawmakers and their staffs.

Orientation Training Sessions

The League hosts regional municipal official orientations every four years, coinciding with an election year for most municipalities. These orientations feature the top legal and administrative authorities on municipal government in Alabama. These trainings are aimed at providing municipal officials, newly elected or seasoned, with an overview of how municipalities operate and the laws and regulations that impact them on a daily basis.

Congressional Luncheons by District

In the summer, ALM hosts in-state congressional luncheons designed to provide municipal officials a unique opportunity to network with their congressional delegation and staff as well as their state lawmakers. In addition, the luncheons are an excellent way to not only develop lasting relationships with your state and federal delegation but to update them on specific issues and concerns facing your communities.

CMO Regional Training

The League's annual CMO Regional Training sessions are specifically designed to allow municipal officials an opportunity for training in fundamental municipal government topics in a location near them. These one-day meetings offer presentations by ALM staff as well as invited subject matter experts.

NLC Training Events

NLC Congressional City Conference

The National League of Cities (NLC) is an organization comprised of city, town and village leaders that are focused on improving the quality of life for their current and future constituents.

With more than 100 years of dedication to the strength and advancement of local governments, NLC has gained the trust and support of more than 2,700 cities across the nation. Their mission is to relentlessly advocate for, and protect the interests of, cities, towns and villages by influencing federal policy, strengthening local leadership and driving innovative solutions.

NLC's Congressional City Conference is an annual event held in Washington, D.C. It provides opportunities for attendees to hear nationally recognized speakers and connect with federal lawmakers.

NLC City Summit

NLC's City Summit is where local leaders connect, learn and engage with experts and their peers. Build your leadership skills and gain proven strategies to support the work you are doing in your community. This event is also held annually in a new location around the country each year. This helps to showcase that, while municipal leaders are diverse in their locations, they are united in their commitment to their communities.

NLC

BIRMINGHAM
HOOVER
MONTGOMERY
DECATUR
GADSDEN
AUBURN
MOBILE
AKRON
CELEBRATING

NLC 100
YEARS
#NLC100

Make the Commitment

You began this journey with enthusiasm and you have added to that the knowledge and confidence of being supported by the League. You are practically unstoppable! Are you excited to learn that you can better your community on the local, state and federal levels? Get involved and stay involved!

One of the best ways to stay involved in the decision making process is to stay connected to the League. Log into the Member Portal and update all of the pertinent information for the League to be able to contact you. This will add you to the mailing lists for *This Week* and the *State House Advocate* newsletters, which will keep you informed of things happening around the state and in the legislature. In addition, the League will be able to send targeted grant opportunities and upcoming event information.

Our members are the most effective advocates on local issues. It is essential that legislators hear from YOU - their constituents - during policy making decisions. On the following page are some resources that will assist you in making sure your voice is heard, whether at the state house or during hometown visits.

Grassroots Advocacy

The Alabama League of Municipalities has been the voice of Alabama's municipalities since 1935. You may have read that once or twice in this booklet! While that is true, sometimes the voice that truly needs to be heard is your own. It makes a difference when you talk to your legislators, especially the ones from your hometown or district. They care what their constituents think and are receptive to concerns and questions about the impact of legislation on your community. To prepare you for these interactions, the League has put together a few flyers with some helpful information. Scan the QR code for access to the Grassroots Advocacy pages of the League website.

Coming to Montgomery

The most direct form of contact with your legislator is by coming to Montgomery and speaking face to face. If this is your intention, there are a few things to keep in mind such as parking, eating and office locations. By far the most important thing to remember to do is to schedule a meeting. Legislators are busy and may not have the time to stop and talk with someone who shows up unannounced. Above all, please remember your actions represent your municipal government and, most importantly, your citizens. When engaging with your legislators, regardless of their position on the issue, always be courteous and thank them for their time.

Meeting Your Legislator

Whether meeting with your legislator in Montgomery or in a hometown visit, it is best to be prepared. Plan your message ahead of time and bring any materials or resources that support your message. The most effective way to communicate a message is to provide real-world examples. This can be done by showing your legislator how the legislation will affect your municipality and citizens. Be flexible; understand that schedules may change at the last minute when legislators are in session.

Calling Your Legislator

We understand you cannot always make a special trip to Montgomery to speak with a legislator; therefore a phone call is the best option. As you know, legislators are busy, especially during session, so expect the call to be brief. You may even have to speak to an assistant or leave a message. When you do speak with someone, be clear about who you are and your concerns. Identify yourself as a constituent or local official, include the bill number and whether you support or oppose it. Using a personal story to illustrate the issue is a great way to clarify your concerns. As always, be courteous and thank the legislator or assistant for their time. Courtesy is contagious!

Writing Your Legislator

Writing a letter to your legislator is a time-honored method of communication. As with a phone call, be clear about who you are and your position on the subject. Keep your letter brief, using only a few key points to support your message. Following up a letter with a phone call may even give you an opportunity to speak with the legislator or their assistant.

Stay in Touch with the League

We know that we have covered a lot of information in this guide and that it can feel overwhelming getting started, but please know that your League is here for you. Reach out to any one of your trail guides at any time, and we will gladly point you in the right direction. We look forward to seeing you at our events and putting what you learn into action. Please be sure to stay connected by following us on social media; see the handles below.

Follow us on X (formerly known as Twitter): @AL_League

Follow us on Facebook: @ALALM

Follow us on Instagram: @alabamacitiesandtowns

Follow us on LinkedIn: @alabama-league-of-municipalities

Follow us on Flickr: flickr.com/photos/alabamaleagueofmunicipalities/albums

Additionally, we want to make you aware that we use the platform Mailchimp to send out the majority of our electronic publications and emails. Unfortunately, some internet service providers may block Mailchimp emails from the League because they think they are spam. Our IT team recommends you whitelist the League's domain with your service provider by following these steps:

- Contact your service provider directly
- Ask them to help you log into the portal website and "whitelist" the League's domain, almonline.org, which should resolve your issue.
    - Please note that the portal website is the site where you most likely pay your bill and is not Outlook or the app on your phone where you receive your email.

Notes

CELEBRATING
90
YEARS
ALM
1935
The VOICE of Alabama's Municipalities
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CELEBRATING

The League Recognizes Our STRATEG

IC PARTNERS

ALABAMA FIRST RESPONDERS
BENEFITS PROGRAM

AMERICAN FIDELITY
a different opinion

AT&T

ELECTRIC CITIES
of Alabama
"Uniting Alabama's Electric Cities"

Coca-Cola
BOTTLING COMPANY
UNITED

ENERGY
SOUTHEAST

MRM
MILLENNIUM
RISK MANAGERS

MUNICIPAL WORKERS
COMPENSATION FUND
MWCF

JMWOOD
AUCTION COMPANY, INC.
THE EQUIPMENT AUCTIONEERS

SAIN
ASSOCIATES

Southeast Gas

spire

TRUCKWORX

VOLKERT

Since 1935, the Alabama League of Municipalities has worked to strengthen municipal government through advocacy, training and the advancement of effective local leadership. Alabama has 466 municipalities. As the recognized voice of Alabama's cities and towns, ALM's municipalities benefit from a variety of member programs, services and activities that are impossible to accomplish individually. For more detailed information about services and programs provided by ALM, visit our website at www.almonline.org. **Happy Trails!**

CELEBRATING 90 YEARS

ALABAMA LEAGUE OF MUNICIPALITIES ALM 1935

The VOICE of Alabama's Municipalities

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