

Chapter 9

Florida League of Cities

Section 9-1 Organization

A. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is limited to any municipality or other unit of local government rendering municipal services in the State of Florida. From a modest beginning of just a few cities and towns, the League has grown throughout the years to include practically all the municipalities in the state; 99 percent of the municipal population of Florida is represented by the League through voluntary membership of cities, towns, villages and charter counties.

B. OFFICERS

The League's Board currently consists of: the League's officers (a president, first vice-president and second vice-president); 30 city officials representing 14 geographical districts; a city official from each of Florida's 10 most populous cities; all past presidents still serving in office; any city official from Florida serving as an officer of the National League of Cities; and any city official beginning his or her 50th year in elected municipal office.

The executive director serves as the secretary-treasurer. A non-voting member is authorized from the Florida City and County Management Association. All officers and directors of the League are elected at the annual meeting. The Charter provides that officers and directors shall be elected officials of municipalities in good standing. In all business conducted at the annual meeting of the League, including the election of officers, each member in good standing is entitled to a weighted vote in accordance with the latest annualized population estimates provided by the State of Florida.

100,000 and more	–	5 votes
25,000 to 100,000	–	4 votes
5,000 to 25,000	–	3 votes
1,000 to 5,000	–	2 votes
Less than 1,000	–	1 vote

C. MEETINGS

Each year the League plans, manages and conducts an annual conference and business meeting in August, an annual legislative conference in November, and various training programs for Florida municipal officials to address the problems common to municipal operation and services to citizens.

D. POLICY COMMITTEES

Florida municipal officials serve on a variety of League committees. Policy work at the committee level continues to be one of the important activities of the League of Cities by combining the first-hand experience of municipal officials with the statewide opportunities of the League. This provides an effective method to study, analyze and report on the emerging problems of municipal government in Florida.

Legislative Policy Committees are appointed by the League president:

1. Finance and Taxation
2. Intergovernmental Relations
3. Energy and Environmental Quality
4. Growth Management and Transportation
5. Urban Administration

The president also appoints a Legislative Committee that considers legislative proposals from the legislative policy committees and recommends an annual legislative program to the League membership. It is only through the cooperative effort of more than 400 municipal officials serving on these committees that the League is able to secure the appropriate background necessary to establish an Action Agenda on municipal operations Florida.

F. LOCAL AND REGIONAL LEAGUES

Most of the state is covered by county or regional leagues, which are developed by city officials to resolve local municipal problems. In some instances, regional leagues provide “umbrella” services to local leagues of cities.

The types of activities within each league vary greatly from networking opportunities, educational programs, state and federal advocacy work, intergovernmental relations with county and school board officials, and other projects.

The local and regional leagues provide an excellent base for developing and assisting the state League on issues relating to urban policy and administration on a statewide basis. The state League looks to the local leagues for active participation and leadership.

G. FINANCIAL OPERATIONS

All League operations are conducted under the guidance of the executive director, appointed by the Board of Directors. In addition, the Board of Directors appoints the League auditor to audit the League’s financial transactions and to report annually on the League’s financial condition.

Income is derived from annual membership dues paid by member governments according to their populations; contractual fees from serving as administrator of the FLC-sponsored financial and insurance trusts; and other income from League operations such as publications and conference registration fees.

Expenditures are budgeted and approved annually by the Board of Directors in accordance with the programs and services offered to the membership. The annual financial audit is available upon request to all members of the League.

Section 9-2

Functions

A. LEGISLATIVE

The Florida Legislature meets in regular session 60 days in the spring of each year. Often, the session is extended or the governor calls one or more special sessions. House and Senate committees usually start meeting in the fall. In addition, rules and regulations are under consideration by dozens of state agencies throughout the year. Advisory committees work with the state agencies to assist in administering programs and carrying out the intent of the law.

The League staff represents the municipalities of Florida at these legislative committee meetings, and often participates in state agency meetings. Each legislative session, it is not unusual for the League to follow several hundred bills and amendments, many of which would critically affect the operations and autonomy of municipal governments. The League staff receives direction from the Legislative Action Agenda adopted by the general membership each year. Also, League staff proactively seeks legislation that would benefit our members, and works with legislative and agency staff on proposed legislation, rules and other matters.

Municipal officials are kept advised of developing issues through regular editions of the *Legislative Bulletin*. Following each legislative session, the League publishes a list of all enacted legislation affecting cities. This enables municipal officials to become knowledgeable of all changes in the law and to implement necessary actions on a timely basis.

B. PUBLIC POLICY

The League participates actively in public policy development on behalf of its members, at the state and federal level. We build relationships with media representatives, local elected officials and the press to represent municipal government in Florida. This includes developing speeches; writing articles for internal and external magazines, newsletters and newspapers; coordinating special events and multi-media public service awareness campaigns.

C. INTERGOVERNMENTAL

The League's Resolutions Committee, which meets at the annual conference, adopts statements pertaining to select federal issues. These resolutions form the platform for our federal advocacy. In addition, the League maintains a close liaison with the Florida congressional delegation.

The Florida League also maintains membership with the National League of Cities (NLC) and actively participates in its programs, including national policy development and federal lobbying. League members often serve on the NLC Board of Directors, steering committees, task forces and policy committees, which are directly responsible for developing NLC's annual statement of urban and legislative priorities.

The League has a federal committee, known as FAST (Federal Action Strike Team). Appointed by the president, this committee works closely with the congressional

delegation. League staff, in conjunction with NLC staff, advise FAST on important issues.

The League serves as a direct liaison providing resources and program information to municipalities at the federal, state, regional and local levels.

D. LEGAL

The League provides legal services designed to ensure its membership remains apprised of legal matters affecting their duties and responsibilities and to advance its membership's point of view at the various levels of state government. The League's legal staff is available to consult with Florida's city attorneys on legal problems facing their particular municipalities. The League also maintains approximately 350 municipal codes, most municipal charters and many ordinances (also available online through the Municipal Code Corporation at www.municode.com). These documents are available to members upon request.

The Legal staff, in addition to advocacy work, provides counsel on the impact of proposed legislation. They also monitor the development of state agency rules and file administrative challenges in those instances where rules seek to limit or impair the ability of cities to manage their own affairs. In addition, the Legal staff provides counsel concerning the corporate affairs of the League's internal operations, the administration of the Insurance and Investment Trusts, and secretariat programs.

The League files amicus curiae briefs in the state's appellate courts when the outcome of the legal issue will materially affect the operation of municipalities. The League also conducts continuing legal education seminars and provides a quarterly newsletter to city attorneys summarizing recent state and federal judicial decisions affecting municipalities.

Lastly, the Legal staff includes the Special Investigation Unit (SIU), which was designed to investigate persons suspected of committing insurance-related fraud against the League-sponsored insurance program. Its goals are to reduce fraud, reduce costs and increase member satisfaction.

E. PUBLICATIONS

The League publishes a bimonthly magazine, *Quality Cities*, which provides in-depth coverage on a broad range of subjects of interest to municipal officials. Information includes feature articles, analysis of legislation, attorney general's opinions, and a directory update report from city hall.

The League also publishes a newsletter, the *Datagram*, which is used to disseminate timely information on a biweekly basis. The *Legislative Bulletin*, published throughout the Florida legislative session, is a summary of the Legislature's work each week, with action steps specified for members to help with advocacy.

Other regular publications include the annual *Membership Directory* and the biennial *Innovations Showcase* magazine, which features new ideas from our members in a wide variety of issue areas. In conjunction with the annual conference, the League compiles and publishes the annual *Financial and Technical Assistance for Florida Municipalities* handbook, which provides information on state and federal agency programs that assist our members.

F. SECRETARIATS

The League provides contractual support services to several municipal and professional associations. This may include conference and meeting planning, membership databases, newsletters and other publications, records management, and general and financial administration. Currently, the Florida City and County Management Association, Florida Local Government Information Systems Association, Florida Government Finance Officers Association, Florida Association of City Clerks, Florida Redevelopment Association, Florida Municipal Attorneys Association, Florida League of Mayors, and the Florida Municipal Association for Safety and Health contract with the League for association services.

G. PUBLIC RISK SERVICES

The Florida League of Cities established its first insurance program in 1977 to provide workers' compensation coverage to governmental entities. Liability, property and health programs followed shortly thereafter.

At inception, all insurance programs operated independently of each other and services were contracted to a third party administrator. In 1987, the League opened its Public Risk Services office to administer the programs in-house. Subsequently, the insurance programs were consolidated under the name of the Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT). The FMIT, governed by elected officials, is a non-assessable, non-profit, tax-exempt risk sharing pool.

As administrator for the FMIT, the League's Public Risk Services Department provides marketing by licensed League field agents; an underwriting/rating and policy service offering customized program and placement capabilities to address the changing needs and exposures of public entities; risk management seminars, publications and other assistance to help the membership in managing risk; risk control programs to promote safe work environments and loss prevention; and claims management, which includes in-house adjusting for workers' compensation, liability and health claims.

The Public Risk Services Department also administers the Florida Municipal Construction Insurance Trust, which provides insurance coverage for large construction projects, as well as on-site safety awareness training.

In addition, this department administers the Florida Municipal Association for Safety and Health. The Public Risk Services operation is based in Orlando.

H. FINANCIAL SERVICES

The League's Department of Financial Services is responsible for several programs offering various levels of benefits to members:

- **Florida Municipal Investment Trust**

Established in 1992, the Florida Municipal Investment Trust (FMIvT) is an inter-local governmental entity created to provide eligible members with an investment vehicle to pool and invest funds in one or more portfolios. The FMIvT offers five fixed-income portfolios and five equity portfolios.

- **Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund**

The Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund (FMPTF) was created in 1983 to help Florida local governments provide retirement plans and other post-employment benefits (OPEB) to their employees with a low-cost, worry-free approach. All plans are individually designed to meet a municipality's needs. The FMPTF uses a "bundled" approach, providing all the necessary components of pension and

OPEB administration. These services include: full recordkeeping, actuarial, custodial services, investment management and performance evaluation.

- **Florida Municipal Loan Council**

Through the Florida Municipal Loan Council (FMLC), the League offers financing assistance for eligible units of local government. The bond proceeds from the program can be used for a variety of purposes including: capital improvements, renovations, additions and refinancing of existing debt.

- **Technical Assistance Services**

The League offers training and technical information in the areas of revenue enhancement and budgeting. Training and technical information is available either as on-site assistance or via teleconferencing.

I. TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

In addition to providing technology services for all internal League operations, the Technology Services Department offers local government's high-quality, cost-effective technology consulting services in the areas of governance, strategic planning, technology evaluations, software selection, project management and disaster planning. Consulting expertise extends beyond administrative operations to utilities and public safety operations.

This department administers the Florida Local Government Information Systems Association and chairs the Technology Education Leadership Council for the Certified Public Technology Management program at the John Scott Daily Florida Institute of Government.

J. SALARY SURVEY

Members of the League are eligible to participate in an online salary survey for elected officials and employees. Check with your city to make sure they are participating in the HR Management Partners, Inc., Florida Public Personnel Association and Florida League of Cities year-round salary survey. Survey results and data entry are available online. The results are available to all FLC members through the www.surveys.us Web site. The survey collects more than 20,000 job records with more than 250 organizations participating.

K. BUSINESS LICENSE COLLECTIONS PROGRAM

Coordinated by the League's Accounting Department, this service was created in 1951. The League, through a service agency, researches and initiates collection procedures for unpaid occupational licenses from insurance companies on behalf of participating cities. Participants are notified of the delinquent licenses and receive 50 percent of the collections. In many cases, the funds received through collections far exceed the dues paid to the League by the municipality. Participants also benefit by adding these companies to their active licensee lists.

L. TRAINING

The FLC partners with the John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government for all training. This includes programs for elected and appointed city officials. For the latest offerings and schedules, please check the FLC Web site under "Conferences and Training." The *Datagram* also features training opportunities. In addition, the Public Risk

Services Department offers risk management training; please contact the Orlando office for more information.

M. MUNICIPAL REVENUE ENHANCEMENT TRAINING

The most important aspect of this service is that it is “customized” specifically to the needs of the city and its officials, unlike seminars and workshops that are presented to a large audience in lecture format. Revenue Enhancement Training usually is an entire-day process that covers all municipal revenues allowed by law, and includes such subjects as: constitutional provisions of taxes and revenues, strategies to reduce a city’s dependence away from the property tax, and methods to maximize non-ad valorem revenues within the general fund. League staff also will review tax ordinances and franchise agreements to identify any provisions that may limit a city’s maximum revenue, give a detailed interpretation of the various components of your franchise agreements, and offer viable options to increase franchise fees during renegotiation. Utility rate structures and charges also are covered in detail. Some cities have found it very useful to conclude the day’s session with a council workshop to cover the important issues identified during the day, as determined by staff.

Section 9-3

Resources

Center for Florida Local Government Excellence (a partnership of FCCMA, IOG and FSCI focused on academics, research and local government issues) <http://cflge.org>

Center for State and Local Government Excellence (a national partnership of NLC, ICMA and other governmental) www.slge.org

Code Research (Web-based research of municipal and county codes)
www.municode.com

Federal Grants www.Grants.gov (find and apply for federal grants there)

Florida Association of City Clerks (FACC) www.facc.org

Florida Association of Code Enforcement (FACE) www.face.org

Florida Association of Counties (FAC) www.fl-counties.com

Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) www.fccma.org

Florida Government Finance Officers Association (FGFOA) www.fgfoa.org

Florida League of Cities (FLC) (the official League Web site) www.flcities.com

Florida League of Cities *Financial and Technical Assistance for Florida Municipalities* (Web-based and hard-copy publication on grants, loans, technical assistance and other resources available to Florida municipalities: free to members)
www.flcities.com

Florida League of Cities Financial Services (investment, loan and bond programs governed by cities for cities) www.flcities.com/financial

Florida League of Cities Public Risk Services (insurance programs governed by cities for cities) www.flcities.com/FMIT_Home

Florida Legislature Web site www.leg.state.fl.us (Find information about your legislators, what bills are filed, by whom, what their history and progress is year-round; research statutes and the constitution; search for names of lobbyists and who they represent; search for key words in Florida statutes)

Florida Local Government Information Systems Association (FLGISA)
www.flgisa.org

Florida League of Mayors (FLM) *www.floridamayors.org*

Florida Municipal Association of Safety and Health (FMASH) *www.fmash.org*

Florida Municipal Attorneys Association (FMAA) *www.fmaa.org*

Florida Redevelopment Association (FRA) *www.redevelopment.net*

Florida Resource Directory (a service of the Governor's Office of Tourism, Trade and Economic Development) *www.floridaresourcedirectory.org*

Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) (representing state and local government financial staff; offering training and professional development)
www.gfoa.org

International City/County Management Association (ICMA) (excellent resource for elected and appointed officials, with an emphasis on those governmental aspects of the council-manager form of government) *www.icma.org*

International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) (representing municipal clerks and providing certification and professional development) *www.iimc.org*

Legislative Committee on Intergovernmental Relations (LCIR) (studies, policy reports and research on Florida local governments) *www.floridalcir.gov*

The Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida and the Bob Graham Center for Public Service at the University of Florida have created the Florida Joint Center for Citizenship. The role of the Joint Center is to promote civic learning and engagement among Florida's citizens, especially young citizens.

- **Lou Frey Institute of Politics and Government at the University of Central Florida** *http://loufrey.cos.ucf.edu/*
- **Graham Center for Public Service** *www.graham.centers.ufl.edu/initiatives.html*

John Scott Dailey Florida Institute of Government (IOG) (low-cost regionally-based research, technical assistance and training for local government officials and employees)
http://iog.fsu.edu

National Civic League (publishes the "Model City Charter" and other valuable resources) *www.ncl.org*

National League of Cities (membership required for certain services) *www.nlc.org*

State of Florida Information Site www.MyFlorida.com (list of state agencies, staff, divisions, functions, contact information, as well as an extensive directory for state employees; links to city and county Web sites)

The Center for Leadership and Civic Education <http://thecenter.fsu.edu/index.html>