

Current Program

ADVOCACY PROGRAM OF THE MANASOTA LEAGUE OF CITIES, INC.

The ManaSota League of Cities (MSLC) is a regional league of the Florida League of Cities. It was formed in 1991 by combining the Manatee League of Cities and the Sarasota County League of Cities. The League is comprised of nine municipalities in Manatee and Sarasota Counties, as well as the charter county of Sarasota County and Manatee County (non-chartered) as an Associate Member. The MSLC is dedicated to a strong, united, and active advocacy program. A commitment has been made to become a voice that is heard and one familiar to legislators as an advocate for Home Rule.

The MSLC President may appoint a member as Advocacy Coordinator for its advocacy program. The Advocacy Coordinator role is to remain updated and familiar with legislative issues and to share information with members at each meeting. The Advocacy Coordinator leads the advocacy effort by staying in constant contact with legislators by correspondence, telephone, and in person. E-mail is utilized to alert members of legislative issues that require immediate attention.

Each November members meet to establish priorities of the MSLC for the upcoming legislative session. In September each year, and throughout the year, members are requested to begin submitting issues and concerns of their respective local governments for consideration in the list of priorities. While considering issues that may be specific to a particular area, the priorities are established primarily on common issues and concerns. The Sarasota City Auditor & Clerk, the Executive Director of the MSLC, assists in establishing the priorities and also brings forth priorities set by the Florida League of Cities for consideration.

Once priorities are established, a brochure entitled “Legislative Priorities of the ManaSota League of Cities” is printed listing the priorities for the upcoming legislative session. It is important to not only list all the priorities for the year, but to select the three or four issues that the MSLC considers high priority on which lobbying efforts should primarily be concentrated. The brochure is used as a lobbying tool and is presented to legislators at the annual Legislative Delegation Hearings. The brochure is updated throughout the session as necessary.

Members are asked to volunteer to be assigned to a particular legislator to serve as the “Key Contact” to that legislator. This does not mean that members cannot work with any or all legislators, but it allows the legislator to establish a name with a face and adds a personal touch to the advocacy program. When an issue of concern arises, the Key Contact may be requested to schedule a meeting with his or her assigned legislator to discuss the issue. Key Contacts are also requested to schedule a meeting with the legislator in the legislator’s district office prior to the legislative session. Key Contacts are asked to provide a summary of their meetings so that all members will be aware of the outcome. Members are encouraged to meet with members of the local legislative delegation at District Offices when the Legislature is not in session.

A calendar is printed for the 60 days of the Legislative Session and the MSLC strives to have groups of two to three members scheduled to travel to Tallahassee to lobby each week on behalf of the priorities. Elected officials of the member cities, as well as the MSLC’s Ex-Officio and Associate Members, are also invited and encouraged to participate in lobbying. Appointments are made with legislators in advance of the travel date. Travel and lodging arrangements are also made for the group. Tuesdays and Wednesdays have been found to be the best days for meeting with legislators. Once in Tallahassee, the group goes directly to the offices of the Florida League of Cities to obtain an update on legislation and is informed of any issues that require immediate attention. Business cards are provided to those who participate in the lobbying activities that indicate they are members of the ManaSota League of Cities and identifying their title and which entity they represent.

An important part of the MSLC lobbying effort is to inform legislators that members are available to them at any time if they should want or require information regarding a particular issue.

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ADVOCACY PROGRAM
OF THE
MANASOTA LEAGUE OF CITIES
(Updated 2/23/2016)

The Manasota League of Cities (MSLC) is a regional league of the Florida League of Cities (FLC), formed in 1991 by the merging of Manatee League of Cities and Sarasota County League of Cities. The Board of Directors is comprised of an elected official from each of the nine municipalities in Manatee and Sarasota Counties. Membership includes non-voting Associate Members consisting of private and public entities.

The MSLC is dedicated to a strong, united, and active advocacy program, with a commitment to Home Rule.

The MSLC works in conjunction with FLC lobbying efforts in identifying common issues and concerns of importance to municipalities. Board members are alerted of legislative issues that require immediate attention. Information is shared by correspondence, telephone, email and in meetings.

Mid-year, the Board begins to establish legislative priorities for the next legislative session. Board members are requested to submit topics, issues, and concerns of their respective local governments for consideration of inclusion in the legislative priorities. While considering issues that may be specific to an area, the priorities are established based on common issues and concerns. Legislative priorities also take into account those identified at the FLC Legislative Conference each year.

Subsequent to establishment of legislative priorities, a Manasota League of Cities' Legislative Priorities brochure is published. The Board identifies two or three major priorities considered to be high priority for advocacy purposes. The brochure is utilized as a lobbying tool and presented to legislators at the annual Local Legislative Delegation Hearings for Manatee and Sarasota County. As additional legislative priorities are identified throughout the year, the brochure is updated.

Early in the advocacy process each year, the MSLC President may appoint Board members to serve as "Key Contacts" to members of the Local Legislative Delegation. This process provides an opportunity for a legislator to establish a personal relationship with a Board member for advocacy purposes.

When an issue of concern arises, the Key Contact may be requested to schedule a meeting with the assigned legislator to discuss the issue. Key Contacts will generally schedule a meeting with the assigned legislator in their District Office prior to the legislative session to review legislative priorities. Subsequent to the meeting, Key Contacts are requested to provide a summary of their meeting to the Board for information purposes. Key Contacts are encouraged to meet with members of the local legislative delegation at District Offices throughout the year. MSLC Board members and Key Contacts may advocate on behalf of the MSLC with all members of the Legislature, and are not limited to the assigned legislator.

During the legislative session, the MSLC strives to schedule Board members to travel to Tallahassee to lobby on behalf of the priorities as required. Appointments with legislators are scheduled through legislative aides in advance of the travel dates.

Due to legislative session activities in Tallahassee, Tuesdays and Wednesdays are generally most favorable for obtaining appointments. Prior to meeting with legislators, Board members are encouraged to attend a legislative briefing at FLC offices. The briefing will provide a status report and information about legislation requiring immediate attention. Occasionally, Board members may attend committee meetings during session to advocate in the early stages of the legislative process.

An important aspect of lobbying efforts is to provide assurance to legislators that the MSLC is available to provide information, input, and assistance on legislative issues relative to municipal governments.

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2017 SESSION DATES

August	1, 2016	Deadline for filing claim bills (Rule 4.81(2))
March	7, 2017	Regular Session convenes (Article III, section 3(b), Constitution) 12:00 noon, deadline for filing bills for introduction (Rule 3.7(1))
April	22, 2017	All bills are immediately certified (Rule 6.8) Motion to reconsider made and considered the same day (Rule 6.4(4))
April	25, 2017	50th day—last day for regularly scheduled committee meetings (Rule 2.9(2))
May	5, 2017	60th day—last day of Regular Session (Article III, section 3(d), Constitution)



End of Agenda Item