



LEGAL OVERVIEW

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Alabama Municipal Official Training Act Q&A

On May 3, 2024, Gov. Kay Ivey signed the Alabama Municipal Official Training Act (“Training Act”) into law. The Alabama League of Municipalities (ALM) drafted the legislation, in partnership with sponsors Sen. Jabo Waggoner and Rep. Jim Hill, to support communities by requiring Alabama municipal officials to complete mandatory training. This training will better position local officials to understand core subjects necessary to maintain their operations, abide by state laws and help their communities prosper. The League has developed the following list of questions and answers to assist municipal leaders in learning more about the act, which takes effect January 1, 2025. While this is a brief overview, the League’s legal team is available to assist members with questions during regular business hours. Any updates will be distributed through the League’s usual communication methods.

WHAT IS THE TRAINING HOUR REQUIREMENT MANDATED BY THE TRAINING ACT?

The Training Act requires that all mayors and councilmembers complete 10 hours of training annually during their first term in office beginning January 1, 2025, regardless of whether the official has previously served as a mayor or councilmember. Each mayor and councilmember who has successfully completed and received their basic Certified Municipal Official (CMO) certification from the Alabama League of Municipalities is exempt from the 10-hour annual requirement. However, starting January 1, 2025, those that are CMO certified still must complete five hours of training annually. Additionally, all elected local officials who have completed the 40-hour training requirement in their first term, are required to complete five hours of training annually each year thereafter. In general, 40 hours of total training is required in a local official’s first term beginning January 1, 2025, and if re-elected, only 20 hours per term is required.

WHAT ARE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL TO COMPLETE AND RECEIVE THEIR BASIC CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL (CMO) CERTIFICATION?

Forty credit hours are required for the basic Certified Municipal Official (CMO) certification. Twenty core curriculum credit hours and 20 basic credit hours are required. These trainings can be completed at in-person ALM events or through online training on the ALM website. Online training provides high quality power point and audio presentations with a required test submission with a score of 70% or above to earn one credit hour. Basic credit hours are earned by attending ALM events throughout the year. ALM events offer approximately 30 or more credit hours each year. Any official who has completed and received their basic CMO certification prior to January 1, 2025, will be exempt from the 40-hour training requirement in their first term; however, they are still mandated by the Training Act to obtain 20-hours of training per term. For more information regarding basic CMO certification **scan the QR code** or visit <https://almonline.org/Assets/Files/BasicCertification.pdf>.



CAN MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS BEGIN TO WORK TOWARD THEIR CMO BASIC CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2025?

There are several opportunities for officials to earn credit hours needed for basic certification before January 1, 2025. Upcoming events qualifying for credit hours are the ALM Municipal Leadership Institute (watch for registration to open late August), NLC City Summit, congressional luncheons in August and online training. Officials are encouraged to sign into the ALM member portal and review their CMO transcript and register for training.

HOW DO MUNICIPAL OFFICIALS FIND OUT HOW MANY CREDIT HOURS THEY HAVE EARNED IN THE CMO PROGRAM?

Officials can review and print CMO transcripts by signing into the ALM member portal. If you do not have a username and password, contact the ALM office at 334-262-2566 for assistance.

HOW DOES A MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL ENROLL IN THE CMO PROGRAM?

Program enrollment is automatic when an official registers and attends an event approved for CMO credit. Then the official must submit an online credit form to receive credit. Another way an official can enroll in CMO is by registering and completing one of the many online training courses available on ALM's website.

HOW CAN A MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL SATISFY THE MANDATED TRAINING REQUIREMENT?

The bulk of the training hours will have to be satisfied by attending League sponsored or endorsed training conferences or events including, but not limited to, the ALM Convention ALM Municipal Leadership Institute, ALM Advocacy Day, ALM orientation sessions, ALM CMO regional training, ALM congressional luncheons, NLC Congressional City Conference and NLC City Summit. However, officials who are not able to attend the in-person conferences and training can satisfy the training requirements by attending and completing online training webinars offered by the League. To receive credit for online training, officials must take and submit the test on the materials presented once prompted at the end of the webinar. A score of 70% or above is required to earn credit.

WHAT SUBJECTS SATISFY THE MANDATED TRAINING REQUIREMENT?

The following subjects are required to be covered by the Training Act: the general powers of municipalities; duties of the mayor and council; ethics; annexations; authority to expend municipal funds; parliamentary procedure; conflicts of interests; legislative advocacy; liability; public records; police and planning jurisdiction; public works bidding; revenue sources; the competitive bid law; budgeting; audit requirements; the public purpose doctrine; the Open Meetings Act; municipal boards and zoning. The Training Act also gives the League discretion to recommend topics that will satisfy the mandated training. Any training provided shall be developed in consultation with the Alabama Ethics Commission, the attorney general's office and the Alabama Department of Examiners of Public Accounts.

IS THE OFFICIAL'S MUNICIPALITY REQUIRED TO PAY FOR THE TRAINING?

Yes. The Training Act requires that the municipality reimburse any mayor or councilmember for any reasonable expenses incurred as a result of receiving the required training. However, the League recommends that officials obtain prior approval from the council, as a body, prior to attending any training, even virtual training. A municipal council has the authority to mandate that a portion of the hours required to satisfy the training requirement be virtual to cut down on costs.

WHAT IS THE COST FOR THE TRAINING?

The League will provide annual training as cost efficiently as possible; on average, training costs less than \$50 an hour, pending economic conditions. Members may consider looking for supplemental funding opportunities in their municipality such as community partnerships and foundations.

DOES THE TRAINING ACT SANCTION THOSE OFFICIALS WHO DO NOT COMPLETE THE MANDATED TRAINING?

No. While there is no penalty provision for participating, the Training Act helps local officials stay up-to-date with best practices for operating a local government and abreast of any state policy changes and reporting requirements. Attending this training also proves to citizens their municipal leaders' commitment to maintaining and improving their quality of life.

HOW DO OFFICIALS ACCESS REGISTRATION FOR IN-PERSON ALM EVENTS AND ONLINE TRAINING THAT QUALIFY FOR TRAINING CREDIT HOURS?

Registering for an ALM event or online training is simple. ALM in-person event registration is promoted across ALM social media platforms, emails and its website. Access the online training registration page by clicking on Online Training under the Training and Resources tab on the ALM website, www.almonline.org/OnlineTraining.aspx or by signing into the member portal and click on the events tab. After registering for online training, look for a registration confirmation email containing the training video link and the test link. **Scan the QR code to visit the online training page.**



HOW DOES EARNING THE DESIGNATION CERTIFIED MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL OR CERTIFIED MUNICIPALITY HELP MY CITY OR TOWN?

A certified municipality designation recognizes and commends 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 in compliance with the Alabama Municipal Official Training Act. Learn more by **scanning the QR code** or visiting <https://www.almonline.org/CertifiedMunicipalAchievementAward.aspx>.



WHERE CAN AN OFFICIAL FIND MORE INFORMATION ON THE CMO PROGRAM AND ALABAMA MUNICIPAL OFFICIAL TRAINING ACT?

Scan the QR codes or visit the links below.



- CMO Program:
<https://www.almonline.org/CMOProgram.aspx>



- Alabama Municipal Official Training Act:
<https://arc-sos.state.al.us/ucp/L1538405.A11.pdf>

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