



# Alabama League of Municipalities Certified Municipal Official Program Frequently Asked Questions

The **Certified Municipal Official Program** consists of a series of one-day continuing education programs and specialized webinars designed for elected municipal officials – mayors and councilmembers – who voluntarily wish to receive formal training in municipal government. All elected municipal officials are eligible to enroll in the CMO Program.

## General Information

**Why should I participate in the CMO Program?** The League’s commitment to provide municipal education to members is part of our mission. The Basic Certified Municipal Official designation signifies each official earning the designation has 40 hours of formal training in municipal government to help them perform their duties during the four-year term. By participating in the CMO Program, officials are better equipped to serve their citizens and help create better communities. Additionally, the League recognizes, commends and awards municipalities where each the mayor and all councilmembers have earned the professional designation of Certified Municipal Official thereby distinguishing the municipality as a Certified Municipality. See Certified Municipality Achievement Award.

**How do I use the Certified Municipal Official designation?** The CMO designation signifies that you have completed a minimum of 40 credit hours of formal training on municipal government conducted or endorsed by the Alabama League of Municipalities. You are entitled to use the designation in your graduation press release, professional correspondence, and in your curriculum vitae. Many officials use the designation in re-election campaigns. A city/town may offer a stipend or pay increase for reaching the CMO Program certification levels.

**How do I enroll in the CMO Program?** Program enrollment is simple. Register and attend an event approved for CMO credit and submit an online credit form provided by unique email to elected officials for the qualifying event. All credit forms must be returned to the League at the time specified. Elected officials are responsible for submitting credit forms as instructed to ensure proper posting of credit hours.

**What is the Certified Municipality Achievement Award?** This annual award from the Certified Municipal Official Program was 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 ALM based on CMO program credit hour records during the previous calendar year. Qualifying municipalities will receive a certificate suitable for framing and an annual Certified Municipality Achievement Award digital seal for your municipal website. Municipalities will be acknowledged, and certificates awarded during ALM’s Annual Convention.

<https://www.almonline.org/CertifiedMunicipalAchievementAward.aspx>

**Where can I find a listing of Certified Municipalities?**

<https://www.almonline.org/CertifiedMunicipalAchievementAward.aspx>

**Do I receive a pay increase from my city or town for reaching a certification level?** Municipal salaries or stipends awarded to officials achieving certification levels in the CMO Program are determined by each municipality.

**Is my city/town required to pay for my training?** No, however, most Alabama's municipalities pay for their municipal officials to attend League training.

## **CMO Program Credit Hours**

**How are CMO credit hours earned and award?** Register and attend an event approved for CMO credit and submit an online credit form provided by unique email to elected officials for the qualifying event. All credit forms must be returned to the League at the time specified. Elected officials are responsible for submitting credit forms as instructed to ensure proper posting of credit hours. League training events and AMIC/MWCF training are approved for credit hours in the CMO Program per event and based on the agenda. Credit hour information can be found on the training agenda and registration information.

**Who do I contact at the League regarding questions I have about my credit hours?** The CMO Program Administrator on the League's website.

**How do I find out how many credit hours I have?** Request a CMO transcript by emailing the CMO Program Administrator from the League's website. Please wait 6-8 weeks following an event approved for CMO credit hours to make a request.

**How many qualifying credit hours are available annually?** The number of credit hours offered annually varies depending on the League's training calendar. Generally, there are about 30+ hours available each year. The Basic Certification can be completed within 2 years if the official is actively engaged in League training.

**Can clerks or other municipal personnel earn credit hours in the CMO Program?** No. The CMO Program is a certification program for elected officials only – mayor and councilmembers.

## **CMO Program Transcripts**

**What is a CMO transcript?** A transcript is an individual's report reflecting the credit hour history in their current program level. View each course, credit hours awarded, and accumulated credit hours. Request a transcript by emailing the CMO Program Administrator from the League's website.

**Who can request a mayor or councilmember's CMO transcript?** Request should come directly from the mayor or councilmember. The clerk can make the request on behalf of the councilmember(s) or mayor. Officials are cc'd on emails when the clerk has requested and received their respective CMO information.

## CMO Program Online Credit Forms

**Am I required to turn in an online credit hours?** Yes. Elected officials enrolled in the program must complete event or meeting CMO Credit Forms provided by the League to receive credit hours. All credit forms must be submitted by an online credit form provided by unique email to elected officials for the qualifying event and must be returned to the League at the time specified. Elected officials are responsible for submitting credit forms as instructed to ensure proper posting of credit hours.

**Why does the CMO credit form ask me if I left a session early?** It could be an ethics violation if you left early and received a full credit for the session. *Ethics Advisory Statement: Be sure to accurately record your time. If you left the event early, be sure to record the time you left in the appropriate response box. Your credit form must accurately reflect the time you are requesting based on the time you attended each session. It may be a violation of the Ethics Law to claim credit for hours or sessions you did not attend.*

**Why are there survey questions on the CMO electronic credit form?** The CMO Program values feedback from attendees. Your responses help us plan future events.

**I failed to submit my online credit form as instructed following a League training event. What should I do?** Email the CMO Program Administrator via the website for instructions on how to proceed. If attendance cannot be verified, credit hours may not be given for forms not returned on-site.

## CMO Program Annual Graduation

**When is CMO Graduation?** The annual CMO Graduation is held in the fall in conjunction with The Municipal Leadership Institute. On election years, the ceremony may be held in early December to accommodate deadlines and orientation conferences related to the elections.

**When is the CMO Graduation qualification deadline?** The qualification deadline each year for CMO Graduation is the end of July.

**How am I notified of graduation status?** Officials who qualify for CMO Graduation are notified by email that their program requirements have been satisfied and the Save The Date information. A formal letter acknowledging and commending their achievement is mailed to each graduating official at the city/town hall address. Notifications are sent following the graduation qualification deadline.

**What if I cannot attend the graduation ceremony?** If you are unable to attend the ceremony notify the CMO Program Administrator. Your award, pin, program and sample press release will be mailed to your attention at city/town hall following the graduation ceremony.

**Where can I find a list of previous year's CMO graduates?** Basic, Advanced and Emeritus graduates from 2011 to present are on the League's website at <https://www.almonline.org/CMOGraduates.aspx>

## Email Addresses and the CMO Program

**How do I update my email address for the CMO Program?** Email Cindy Price at [cprice@almonline.org](mailto:cprice@almonline.org). Contact Cindy Price from the ALM website.

**What is ALM's Email Privacy Policy?** We are committed to keeping your e-mail address confidential. We do not sell, rent, or lease our contact data or lists to third parties, and we will not provide your personal information to any third-party individual, government agency, or company at any time without your permission unless compelled to do so by law.

## Core Curriculum

**What is the core curriculum?** The core curriculum is an approved list of essential municipal training courses. 10 hours are required within in the Basic Certification Program. Officials must complete a total of ten (10) hours comprised of two (2) hours of required topics and eight (8) hours of elective topics from an approved list and 30 additional hours of approved training to complete the basic program.

**How were the courses chosen for the core curriculum?** The ALM Executive Committee approved the core curriculum effective October 2012 to ensure the Certified Municipal Official designation signifies each official earning the designation has completed 10 hours of essential municipal training coursework. The courses are selected topics from the League's publication, *Selected Readings for Mayor and Councilmembers*. The core curriculum is specifically designed to educate elected officials on the fundamentals of municipal government.

**How does the Core Curriculum work?** Ten hours of specific coursework within the Basic Certification Program is the core curriculum. Attend onsite training or Anytime Training on the two required courses: Duties of the Mayor and Council and General Powers of Municipalities. Attend onsite training or Anytime Training earning eight (8) hours of approved elected courses. See Core Curriculum Courses <https://www.almonline.org/CMOProgram.aspx>.

**Do I have to complete the Core Curriculum?** Yes, if you enrolled in the CMO Program after October 2012. Officials enrolled in the CMO Program prior to October 2012 are grandfathered under the previous requirements for the Basic Certification. All core curriculum trainings are offered at League training events, the CMO Program webinars and as Anytime Training available on the website. <https://www.almonline.org/AnytimeTraining.aspx>.

**One of my co-councilmembers is not required to complete the core curriculum. Why?** Officials enrolled **prior to** October 2012 are grandfathered under the prior program requirements. All officials enrolled **after** October 2012 are required to complete the core curriculum.

**I was an elected official active in the CMO Program prior to October 2012 and left office. I have been appointed or elected again. Am I required to complete the core curriculum?** No, you are grandfathered under the previous program requirements. An official's records remain in the program even if they leave municipal office. *In the event an inactive official enrolled in the CMO Program prior to October 2012 returns to elected office and becomes active in the CMO Program he or she will not be required to complete the core curriculum hours.*

## Basic Certification

**Where do I find information on the CMO Basic Certification Program?** On the League's website at this link: <https://www.almonline.org/CMOProgram.aspx>.

**How many hours are required for the Basic Program?** A total of 40 credit hours of training are required for Basic Certification. Officials must complete a core curriculum. The core is ten (10) hours comprised of two (2) hours of required topics and eight (8) hours of elective topics from an approved list and 30 additional hours of approved training to complete the program. See core curriculum information.

**I have more than 40 hours of training, yet I have never received by Basic Certification. Why?** To receive the Basic Certification, you must complete 10 hours of core curriculum hours. You cannot receive the Basic Certification until those hours are completed. Hours earned over those needed for the Basic Program roll into the Advanced Program credit hours. Contact the CMO Program Administrator to see which coursework needs to be completed.

**I have taken a training twice, but credit hours are posted only once time. Why is my second attendance not reflected?** For core curriculum hours, duplicate credit is not awarded for completing a required or elective course. We recommend recording your completed core curriculum coursework to avoid duplicating training. For all other credit hours, a two-year period is required for receiving credit hours on the same training topic.

**What happens to earned credit hours after I complete the Basic Program?** All credit hours earned are applied to your CMO record. Hours over those needed for the Basic Program are posted to your Advanced Program.

**If I receive municipal training from another meeting can I earn credit hours in the CMO Program?** Yes. Five credit hours per calendar year may be attained by attending non-League training if approved by the League. A copy of the agenda and event registration confirmation must be submitted to the Program Administrator for approval and evaluation for credit hours in the CMO Program. No more than 10 hours of non-League training credit hours may be used toward the 40 credit hours needed for CMO certification.

**How do I know if I am close to completing the Basic Program?** The CMO Program notifies officials by email when they are within five (5) hours of graduating. It is important to provide an email address that is active and routinely checked. You may contact the CMO Program Administrator to request a credit hour report be emailed to you. We recommend updating your credit hour report as you complete training.

**I lost my Basic CMO pin. Can I get a replacement?** Yes. Replacement pins are \$5.00 each. Contact the CMO Administrator from the League's website [www.almonline.org](http://www.almonline.org).

## Advanced Certification

**Where do I find information on the CMO Advanced Certification Program?** On the League's website at this link: <https://www.almonline.org/CMOProgram.aspx>.

**How many hours are required for the Advanced Program?** Forty (40) hours of approved League training. No credit hours for non-League are permitted in the Advanced Certification Program.

**What happens to credit hours after I complete the Advanced Program?** All credit hours earned are applied to your CMO record. Hours earned over those needed for the Advanced Program roll into the Continuing Education credit hours. Hours and points are tracked to verify requirements for active status and to track progress toward the Emeritus Certification.

**How do I know if I am close to completing the Advanced Program?** The CMO Program notifies officials by email when they are within five (5) hours of graduating. It is important to provide an email address that is active and routinely checked. You may contact the CMO Program Administrator to request a credit hour report be emailed to you. We recommend updating your credit hour report as you complete training.

**I lost my Advanced CMO pin. Can I get a replacement?** Yes. Replacement pins are \$5.00 each. Contact the CMO Administrator from the League's website [www.almonline.org](http://www.almonline.org).

## **Continuing Education Program**

**What are Continuing Education credit hours?** Continuing Education credit hours are hours earned following the Advanced Certified Municipal Official designation. Credit hours are tracked to verify requirements for active status and to track progress toward the Emeritus Certification.

**What is the Continuing Education Requirement for the Advanced Programs?** The Advanced Certified Municipal Official designation requires twenty (20) credit hours of approved training within three (3) calendar years to retain an active Advanced CMO status.

**How does my Advanced Certified Municipal Official designation become inactive?** The Advanced Certified Municipal Official designation becomes inactive when an official does not earn twenty (20) credit hours of approved training within three (3) calendar years following the Advanced Certified Municipal Official designation.

**How do I reinstate my Advanced Certified Municipal Official designation?** To reinstate Advanced Certified Municipal Official designation active status a municipal official must complete five (5) credit hours of training by webinar, anytime training, or attendance at a League event. Upon completion of reinstatement requirements, officials will be notified of active status.

## **Emeritus Certification**

**Where do I find information on the CMO Emeritus Certification Program?** On the League's website at this link: <https://www.almonline.org/CMOProgram.aspx>.

**What are the requirements for Emeritus Certification?** Emeritus Certification requires completing 120 credit hours of CMO Continuing Education and earning 15 points in the Emeritus Program. Note: Credit hours received in the basic and advanced programs **do not transfer to the Emeritus program**. *Also see what are Emeritus Points?*



**What are Emeritus Points?** Each in-person event listed below is eligible for one (1) Emeritus point. Upon completion of one of the qualifying events, an official is awarded one (1) point toward their Emeritus Certification. Up to six (6) 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 Congress of Cities
- Attendance at the NLC Congressional City Conference
- Attendance at the Municipal Legislative Advocacy Session and meeting with Legislators
- Attendance at the Municipal Leadership Institute

**Do my credit hours from the Basic and Advanced programs carry over to the Emeritus Program?** No. The Emeritus Certification requires an additional 120 Continuing Education hours and 15 points. Credit hours are tracked to verify requirements for active status as the official progresses toward the Emeritus Certification. The Emeritus Certification generally takes 5+ years to complete.

**What is the Continuing Education Requirement for the Emeritus Programs?** The Emeritus Certification requires twenty (20) credit hours of approved training within three (3) calendar years to keep the Emeritus CMO status active.

**How do I know if I am close to completing the Emeritus Program?** The CMO Program notifies officials by email when they are within ten (10) hours and or three (3) points of graduating. It is important to provide an email address that is active and routinely checked. You may contact the CMO Program Administrator to request a credit hour report be emailed to you. We recommend updating your credit hour report as you complete training.

**I lost my Emeritus CMO pin. Can I get a replacement?** Yes. Replacement pins are \$5.00 each. Contact the CMO Administrator from the League's website, [www.almonline.org](http://www.almonline.org).

## **Officials No Longer in Office and the CMO Program**

**Can I complete the Basic Certification Program if I am no longer in office?** Yes. Elected municipal officials who enrolled and participated in the Basic Certification Program during their term of office but left office before completing the requirements will have one (1) year to utilize the CMO Program Anytime Trainings or submit documentation from non-League training to complete the program after they leave office. Upon successful completion of program requirements within the ascribed time, the participant may earn the official designation of Certified Municipal Official. An award letter, pin and graduation certificate will be mailed to the address provided by the participant. **Contact the CMO Program Administrator for assistance in completing the Basic Certification program.**

**Can I attend in person League training events if I am no longer hold an elected municipal office but want to complete the Basic Certification Program?** Only if you are a municipal employee and you are within one year of your date of separation from elected office. As a municipal employee are you are permitted to register and attend training events. CMO credit hours must be earned and posted to your records within one year of your date of separation from elected office. **Requires Pre-approval! Contact the CMO Program Administrator for assistance in completing the Basic Certification program.**

**Can I register for CMO Program Anytime Training if I am no longer in office?** Yes, but participation must be pre-approved. Elected municipal officials who enrolled and participated in the Basic Certification Program during their term of office but left office before completing the requirements will have one (1) year to earn credit hours via Anytime Training and non-League Training to complete the program after they leave office. **Contact the CMO Program Administrator for assistance in completing the Basic Certification program.**

## **CMO Program Webinars and Anytime Training**

**What are CMO Program webinars?** The League has expanded the Certified Municipal Official Training Program to include specialized webinar training. Our in-person League events are valuable, and we'll always offer them, but online will have a place too. Webinars offer training that is a convenient way to engage in municipal training. We think you will find the addition of webinars a helpful resource to provide training for elected officials and municipal personnel. We hope to "see" you online soon!

**What is Anytime Training from the CMO Program?** Anytime Trainings are recorded trainings from our popular specialized live webinars. The addition of training at your fingertips is a valuable resource for elected officials and municipal personnel. Most of the trainings offered meet core curriculum requirements. Anytime Trainings are fee based and CMO credit hours can be earned by mayors and councilmembers by submitting a test on the material presented.

**Why should I consider participating in the CMO Program webinars?** The specialized webinars are designed to offer training that is convenient for municipal officials and municipal personnel. Train at your desk or join in from your cell phone or iPad. The topics range from core curriculum training to elections training and other timely information. Webinars offer a Q & A session at the end of the presentation. Webinars are fee based and CMO credit hours can be earned by mayors and councilmembers by submitting a test on the material presented.

**Why should I consider using ANYTIME Training for credit hours?** Anytime training is municipal training at your fingertips. Webinars are fee based and CMO credit hours can be earned by mayors and councilmembers by submitting a test on the material presented. It is a convenient method to jump start your CMO credit hours or to complete the last few hours needed for your certification level. Webinars are fee based and CMO credit hours can be earned by mayors and councilmembers by submitting a test on the material presented.

**I registered for a CMO webinar and cannot attend. Can I receive a refund?** No. Webinar registration fees are not refundable. Substitutes are not permitted due to registration platform restraints. Registrants can still access training and earn the credit hour though a follow up email with the recorded training and test link sent to all webinar registrants who are unable to attend the live event.

## **Registering for CMO Training Events**

**How do I register for CMO training events?** ALL League events require an online registration. Each registrant is required to have a unique email address that is routinely checked. Registration confirmations, important updates and other timely event information is sent by email.

**I do not have an email address so how do I register for a CMO training event?** ALL League events require an online registration using a unique email address that is routinely checked. Registration confirmations, important updates and other timely event information is sent by email. The CMO Program uses email addresses to notify



municipal officials of upcoming training, send credit hour reports and share timely and important information. You are encouraged to provide an active and routinely checked email address for these purposes. We are committed to keeping your e-mail address confidential. We do not sell, rent, or lease our contact data or lists to third parties, and we will not provide your personal information to any third-party individual, government agency, or company at any time without your permission unless compelled to do so by law.

**Can clerks or other municipal personnel register for CMO training events?** Yes. The CMO Program offers training each year that is excellent training for clerks and municipal personnel. Clerks and municipal personnel routinely register for webinars, CMO training events and the League's annual convention. The CMO Program does not request or obtain pre-certification credit hours for other certification programs. If you have a certification program, we are happy to provide an attendance verification letter for your records.

**I registered for a CMO training event and cannot attend. Can I get a refund?** Yes, for CMO training events. Refunds are available for CMO onsite training events in accordance with the cancellation policy. Substitutes are permitted to take the place of the original registrant in the event he/she cannot attend. Contact the League for assistance with an attendee substitution. *Cancellation Policy: Full refunds of the registration fee will be made if the registrant cancels 15 or more days prior to the meeting for which he or she is registered. If registrant cancels 10 to 15 days prior to the meeting, a refund of 25% of the registration fee will be made. No partial refunds will be made for cancellations made less than ten (10) days prior to the meeting except for approved medical reasons. Substitutes will be allowed. The League reserves the right to cancel any session for which 30 or fewer participants are registered. Registrants for any cancelled session will be assigned to another session at the location of their choice or the registration fee will be refunded at the choice of the registrant. The annual convention registration refunds are under a separate cancellation policy.*