



2026 Classes and Events

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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

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The Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute is a continuing education program designed to help city officials enhance their knowledge and skills in municipal-related matters.

Training classes are offered in conjunction with GMA conferences as well as at stand-alone events throughout the year. Except for the state-mandated Newly Elected Officials Institute, the classes offered are voluntary and offer city officials the opportunity to obtain training beyond what is required by state law. By completing this additional training, municipal elected officials and city managers/assistant city managers can earn a Certificate of Recognition, Certificate of Achievement, Certificate of Excellence, Certificate of Distinction and Certificate of Dedication. The Municipal Training Institute is operated through a partnership between the Georgia Municipal Association and the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Oversight is provided by the Municipal Training Board, which is comprised of municipal elected officials, a city manager and representatives from partnering organizations.



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Certificate Requirements



THE CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

Requires 42 hours of training, including at least 18 hours from the required list and the Newly Elected Officials Institute.

THE CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

Requires 72 hours of training, including at least 36 hours from the required list and the Newly Elected Officials Institute.

THE CERTIFICATE OF EXCELLENCE

Requires 120 hours of training, including at least 54 hours from the required list, the Newly Elected Officials Institute and the Robert E. Knox, Jr. Municipal Leadership Institute.

THE CERTIFICATE OF DISTINCTION

Requires 204 hours of training, including at least 72 hours from the required list, the Newly Elected Officials Institute and the Robert E. Knox, Jr. Municipal Leadership Institute.

THE CERTIFICATE OF DEDICATION

Requires 276 hours of training, including at least 108 hours from the required list, 18 hours of which must be from the Advanced Leadership track, the Newly Elected Officials Institute and the Robert E. Knox, Jr. Municipal Leadership Institute. After obtaining the Certificate of Dedication, officials must complete nine hours of continuing education each year to maintain the certificate.

THE 400 CLUB

Introduced in 2025, the 400 Club honors individuals who have completed 400 or more hours in the Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute. Newly inducted members are recognized during the Cities United Summit and the Annual Convention.

***The Newly Elected Officials Institute requirement is waived for city managers/assistant city managers.**



Please Keep in Mind

Effective January 2023, officials may receive additional credit hours for retaking up to two classes a year from the Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute’s curriculum, so long as the recipient has not received credit for those classes within the last five years.

After obtaining the Certificate of Dedication, officials must complete nine hours of continuing education each year to maintain the certificate. Those who have earned the Certificate of Dedication can retake any class they have taken five or more years ago and receive credit.

Certificates are awarded during the January Cities United Summit in Atlanta and the June Annual Convention in Savannah. Training Credits must be earned 21 days prior to the conference to receive a certificate during the conference.

Class Categories

Training classes are shown below by category to help city officials easily select classes by areas of interest. Some classes will fall into more than one category. City officials may want to focus on one track of study at a time or take classes from each category.

CITY OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

- Effective Practices for Municipal Operations 101
- Employee Benefits 101 (Retirement)
- How to Attract and Retain Young Professionals in Your Town
- Human Resources (in-person and online)
- Information Privacy and Security Breaches: Prevention and Response
- Municipal Annexation: Growing Pains and Growth Spurts
- Municipal Gas Systems 101
- Municipal Electric Systems 101
- Municipal Law
- Municipal Law Update
- Municipal Water & Wastewater Systems
- Open Meetings
- Open Records
- Open Meetings/Open Records Online
- Public Works Services
- Planning and Zoning
- Risk and Insurance 101
- Steering Through the Storm: Guiding Your Community Through A Disaster
- Trends in Urban Design for Local Leaders
- Water Management — An Introduction for Local Governments

COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Building Bridges Between Cities and Colleges
- Building Community Capacity Through Tourism
- Changing Demographics and Best Practices
- Creating a Downtown Renaissance: Advanced DDA Training
- Current Issues Class: Workforce Development
- Downtown Development Authority Basic Training

- Economic Development
- Economics of Education
- Effective Branding and Marketing Strategies for Municipal Governments
- Entrepreneur Friendly Cities
- Georgia Academy for Economic Development
- Heart and Soul Downtown Workshop
- How to Attract and Retain Young Professionals in Your Town
- Living Beyond Expectations: The Opportunities and Challenges of the Growing Senior Population
- Managing Growth: Economic and Natural Resource Issues
- Mobile Workshop – Port of Savannah
- Planning and Zoning
- Revitalizing Neighborhoods — Tools for Local Officials
- Strengthening the Well-being of Children & Youth
- Trends in Urban Design for Local Leaders

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Advancing Georgia’s Response to Human Trafficking
- Building Bridges Between Cities and Colleges
- Building Collaborative Relationships to Solve Community Challenges
- Community and Media Relations
- Data Literacy and Storytelling for Cities
- Effective Branding and Marketing Strategies for Municipal Governments
- Evolving with Technology: Key Insights
- Excellence in Customer Service
- Let’s Get Social
- Making Citizen Engagement Work in Our Communities
- Public Presentations and Meet the Media

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

- Beyond the Beltway: Influencing Federal Policy through Grassroots Engagement
- Building Collaborative Relationships to Solve Community Challenges
- Building a Hometown Connection: GMA Lobbying 101
- Building Bridges Between Cities and Colleges
- Municipal Annexation: Growing Pains and Growth Spurts
- Regional Approaches to Cooperation
- Service Delivery Strategy – Efficiency & Tax Equity for Local Governments

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

- Conflict Resolution
- Ethics
- Governing the Commons: Collective Decision Making in Complex Systems
- Harmony In Leadership: Nurturing Kindness, Civility, And Transformational Influence
- How Shall We Live? Practical Ethics for Public Life
- Mayors Leadership Academy
- Navigating the Future: Thinking, Planning and Acting Strategically
- Practices for Successful Meetings
- Public Policy Development and Implementation
- Public Problems, Democratic Decisions - The Governing Role of Mayors and Councilmembers
- Robert E. Knox, Jr. Municipal Leadership Institute
- Retreats
- Roles and Responsibilities of Council and Staff
- Succession Planning: Preparing for Tomorrow’s Workforce Today

PUBLIC SAFETY

- Addressing Homelessness
- Advancing Georgia’s Response to Human Trafficking
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services
- Law Enforcement Services: Trends & Best Practices
- Municipal Courts Post-Ferguson I: Promoting Justice, Protecting City Assets

- Municipal Courts Post-Ferguson II: Promoting Justice, Protecting City Assets
- Steering Through the Storm: Guiding Your Community Through A Disaster

QUALITY OF LIFE

- Addressing Homelessness
- Advancing Georgia’s Response to Human Trafficking
- Current Issues Class: Health in All Policies — Impactful Local Decision-Making to Ensure Healthier Communities
- Economics of Education
- Environmental Sustainability
- Housing Solutions for Cities — Part Mobile Workshop
- Living Beyond Expectations: The Opportunities and Challenges of the Growing Senior Population
- Recreation and Parks – Building Communities
- Strengthening the Well-being of Children & Youth

REVENUE AND FINANCE

- Capital Improvement Program (in-person and online)
- Data Literacy and Storytelling for Cities
- Funding and Programming Transportation Projects In Your Community
- Local Government Debt Methods (in-person and online)
- Money, Money, Money...Money: Funding City Projects and Programs Through Grants and Loans
- Municipal Finance I
- Municipal Finance II
- Municipal Long-Term Budgeting
- Municipal Taxation 101 - The Basics
- Municipal Taxation 102 - The Basics Continued

SPECIAL

- Newly Elected Officials Institute

STATE-MANDATED TRAINING FOR MUNICIPAL ELECTED OFFICIALS

NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS INSTITUTE

The Newly Elected Officials Institute provides a general overview of the function of municipal government in Georgia and the roles and responsibilities of mayors and councilmembers. The class includes an introduction to key issues such as ethics, municipal finance, planning and zoning, open meetings, open records and parliamentary procedures. All municipal elected officials taking office since July 1, 1990, are required by state law to complete the Newly Elected Officials Institute. This class is only open to municipal elected officials. (This class provides 6 hours of credit.)

RECOMMENDED CLASSES FOR NEWLY ELECTED AND FIRST-TERM OFFICIALS

Aside from the required Newly Elected Officials Institute, the following voluntary classes are recommended for officials who are newly elected, are in their first term or are new to municipal training.

- Community and Media Relations
- Conflict Resolution

- Ethics
- Making Citizen Engagement Work in Our Communities
- Municipal Finance I
- Municipal Law
- Open Meetings
- Open Records
- Practices for Successful Meetings
- Public Policy Development and Implementation
- Roles and Responsibilities of Council and Staff

ONLINE, ON-DEMAND CLASSES

The following classes are also offered as online, on-demand classes. Each class must be completed within 30 days of accessing the class. A link to the registration information can be found on GMA’s website.

- Capital Improvement Program
- Local Government Debt Methods
- Open Meetings / Open Records
- Human Resources: An Online Course for Governmental Officials



Required Classes For Municipal Training Institute Certificates

COMMUNITY AND MEDIA RELATIONS (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class examines the importance of building effective working relationships with the media and the role the media plays in informing the public and shaping their opinion of municipal governments. Advice for repairing poor relationships is provided, along with insights on when and how to speak with reporters, especially during times of crisis.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

CONFLICT RESOLUTION (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class explores strategies and techniques for successfully resolving conflict through negotiation and mediation. Emphasis is placed on identifying the sources of conflict and the personality styles of the parties involved.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class provides a basic overview of the economic development process, with a focus on the strategies, resources and programs employed by the State of Georgia to assist communities in achieving success in today’s global economy. Topics such as community development building blocks, business development strategies, regional cooperation and the role of local leadership in economic development are covered.

ETHICS (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class examines the importance of ethical conduct in the administration of one’s public duties and how ethical lapses can severely damage the reputation of both individual officeholders and the city. An overview of state ethics laws and regulations that apply to municipal officials, including campaign financing and private interest disclosure requirements, is provided. Ethical dilemmas

that often confront public officials and the value of strong local ethics ordinances are also discussed.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

HARMONY IN LEADERSHIP: NURTURING KINDNESS, CIVILITY, AND TRANSFORMATIONAL INFLUENCE (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class is designed to explore the fundamental principles of kindness, civility, emotional intelligence, and moral and ethical leadership behavior. Participants will delve into various aspects of interpersonal relationships, communication strategies, and leadership techniques aimed at fostering a culture of respect, understanding, and compassion in municipal governance.

HUMAN RESOURCES (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class provides an overview of state and federal personnel laws that apply to municipal governments and the basics of human resource management. Key topics include day-to-day issues facing human resource staff, the role of the personnel manager, establishing and adhering to sound personnel policies and procedures, and dealing with the media.

💻 Human Resources is also offered as an online class

INFORMATION PRIVACY AND SECURITY BREACHES: PREVENTION AND RESPONSE (3-HOUR CLASS)

Elected officials and city management are the “face” of a city’s commitment to information privacy and security. This class covers what municipal officials “need to know” about information privacy and security policies including: risk assessment, access controls, security provisions in contracts, disaster recovery/business continuity, workforce training and incident/breach readiness. Class attendees review actual municipal and county information privacy

and security breaches. Participants also hear how to champion for the resources to secure city information and how to designate the city as a HIPAA “hybrid entity.”

MAKING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT WORK IN OUR COMMUNITIES (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class explores the importance of getting citizens engaged in the process of governance. The class exposes officials to the concept of deliberative forums, a method of citizen engagement that brings diverse community interests together to explore policy options and share insights, ideas and suggestions in a structured setting. Participants receive tips, tools and other resources for recruiting residents, creating productive conversations and encouraging residents to be involved in local problem-solving.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

MUNICIPAL COURTS POST-FERGUSON I: PROMOTING JUSTICE, PROTECTING CITY ASSETS (3-HOUR CLASS)

This class reviews how municipal courts are required by law to handle common offenses, such as traffic offenses, certain misdemeanors and municipal ordinance violations. Designed for municipal elected officials and city managers / assistant city managers, it addresses court practices that have led to class actions and investigations across the country. In addition to a basic knowledge of the role of the judge, court clerk, prosecutor, probation service provider and city leadership, attendees leave class with a self-assessment and set of model documents. These tools help officials ensure that the courts are promoting justice and supporting public safety and are not jeopardizing the city’s “brand” and exposing the city to financial harm.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

MUNICIPAL FINANCE I (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class is intended to serve as a basic primer on municipal finance issues that all mayors, councilmembers and managers should understand. A discussion of the budget process, the revenue sources available to cities, purchasing policies and financing capital improvements is included in this general overview.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials



Natalyn Bates
Morris

COUNCILMEMBER
GARDEN CITY

“The Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute provides high-quality educational resources for elected officials. Their classes have been remarkably effective in enhancing my skills as a councilmember and enriching my understanding of local government systems. The knowledge and insights I have gained allow me to better serve the citizens of Garden City. Additionally, the connections I have fostered with city officials from across the state are invaluable.”

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MUNICIPAL FINANCE II
(6-HOUR CLASS)

This class emphasizes the importance of establishing sound financial policies and provides participants with a better understanding of how to read and understand audited city financial statements, assess the effectiveness of internal accounting controls and manage a city’s cash and investments. **This class may be taken before or after Municipal Finance I.**

MUNICIPAL LAW
(6-HOUR CLASS)

This class provides an overview of the major sources of municipal authority and the limitations of that authority, including constitutional and statutory law. Municipal charters and ordinances are discussed, and participants are encouraged to read their city’s charter before attending this class. How to enter into legal contracts is reviewed. This class also provides a foundation for understanding the liability and immunity of cities, elected officials and municipal employees. If time permits, this class may also address working with the city attorney.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

MUNICIPAL TAXATION 101 - THE BASICS
(3-HOUR CLASS)

The class gives municipal officials an overview of the fundamentals of local government taxation with an in-depth look at the two primary funding sources for local government in Georgia: property tax and sales tax. This class is designed to give participants an understanding of tax language and appropriate usage of revenues, preparing them to communicate tax issues to residents and make prudent decisions related to expenditures.

MUNICIPAL WATER AND WASTEWATER SYSTEMS
(3-HOUR CLASS)

Water and wastewater services are fundamental to the operation of a city. This class provides an overview of the management of these services and introduces participants to the significant role of water in community health, quality of life and economic development. This class also describes various service delivery methods and discusses the challenges and opportunities that municipal officials face in providing water and wastewater services to their customers.

OPEN MEETINGS
(3-HOUR CLASS)

Open, accessible meetings are a hallmark of local government and are important for communicating with residents and businesses. This class examines the requirements of Georgia’s Open Meetings Act, what constitutes a “meeting” and the limited circumstances authorizing executive sessions. The importance of proper notice as well as meeting agendas, summaries and minutes are discussed. Class participants are apprised of potential consequences for failing to follow the law.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

📖 Open Meetings is also offered as an online class

OPEN RECORDS
(3-HOUR CLASS)

This class familiarizes municipal officials with Georgia’s open records law and the potential consequences for failing to adhere to it. The class also includes practical application of open records issues through the use of hypothetical scenarios. Additionally, the class will cover records and access issues related to social media platforms and government property, including government buildings. Records management and the requirements of the Georgia Open Records Act are reviewed as well as legal obligations for preserving records for litigation.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

📖 Open Records is also offered as an online class

PLANNING AND ZONING
(6-HOUR CLASS)

This class examines the difficult choices municipal officials encounter in stimulating economic well-being, protecting public infrastructure investment and maintaining environmental integrity. It examines legal considerations for planning and zoning, the role of the mayor, council and manager, and practical steps for maintaining a comprehensive plan and effective zoning procedures. In addition, the class highlights issues, barriers and policy solutions associated with efforts to achieve desirable patterns of development.

PRACTICES FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS
(3-HOUR CLASS)

The success of a city is often gauged by how its residents perceive city council meetings. This class is designed to give elected officials and others a practical understanding of the most commonly

used procedures available to govern meetings. The basic tenets of Robert’s Rules of Order, as well as alternatives to Robert’s, are taught in a manner that seeks to arm presiding officials with the tools necessary to run successful and productive gatherings of their elected officials and other meetings necessary to operate cities.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION
(3-HOUR CLASS)

Developing policy to advance the vision of the city is one of the most important duties that a mayor and council perform. This class is designed to give municipal officials an understanding of the importance of that function and the role of the elected officials and professional staff in developing, implementing and evaluating those policies. Participants learn how to effectively use policy-making models in the development of practical public policy that will benefit their communities and residents.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

PUBLIC WORKS SERVICES
(3-HOUR CLASS)

Public works services are fundamental to the operation of a city. This class introduces participants to the types of services provided through public works departments and the important role those services play in community health, quality of life and economic development. **This class is a reformatted version of the Public Works and Transportation class. Those who have already taken the Public Works and Transportation class will NOT get additional credit for taking this class, unless, per the 2023 policy, the official took the Public Works and Transportation class five or more years ago.**

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF COUNCIL AND STAFF
(3-HOUR CLASS)

While municipal elected officials have the responsibility to develop policies to effectively address complex issues and problems that are often unique to cities, they typically must rely on public sector employees to implement them. In this class, the different perspectives of council and staff are explored in order to identify ways for them to collaborate in addressing public problems.

★ Recommended for Newly Elected and First-term Officials

STEERING THROUGH THE STORM: GUIDING YOUR COMMUNITY THROUGH A DISASTER
(6-HOUR CLASS)

During times of natural or human-made disasters and pandemics, cities are often faced with the challenge of steering through the “storm,” continuing city business operations, and communicating effectively, to meet the basic needs of their community as well as managing the needs and demands of the on-going recovery operation. While the initial focus following a major disaster is to respond to the life safety aspects of the emergency, multiple tasks will quickly emerge to face the local leadership team. Is your city prepared for the organizational resiliency necessary to sustain regular services as well as emergency operations during the four distinct phases of a disaster? What is the role of elected leaders in these scenarios? This class will define the various types of disasters, review the four phases of a disaster and the planning and preparedness required for community resilience in responding to disasters, exploring methods for prioritizing crucial essential services, and recognizing the multiple impacts on the local economy, city services and city staff. **This class includes some content from the previous class, “Emergency Management.” Those who previously took Emergency Management can take this class and receive credit towards a training certificate.**



Advanced Leadership Track

The advanced leadership track includes the following three six-hour classes, all of which must be completed to earn the Certificate of Dedication.

PUBLIC PROBLEMS, DEMOCRATIC DECISIONS - THE GOVERNING ROLE OF MAYORS AND COUNCILMEMBERS (6-HOUR CLASS)

Why do we have the government we have? In this class, public officials explore the democratic context of leading and governing. It addresses the role of elected officials in a democratic society, the relationship between elected and appointed officials, core values underlying public problems and choices and the reasons why councils can make better choices than individuals. The goals of this class are to help public officials better understand their roles in leading and governing their communities, to develop a better understanding of what councils do and why, and to develop practical skills in public problem-solving and decision-making. In addition to discussing disruptive trends facing local government, participants learn how to use public problems to converse about the kind of community they want to build and how to ensure that their choices and decisions preserve the fundamental goals of our democratic society. **This class is limited to 45 participants.**

GOVERNING THE COMMONS: COLLECTIVE DECISION MAKING IN COMPLEX SYSTEMS (6-HOUR CLASS)

Local government officials have pondered questions about understanding and defining the public good and how we achieve it as a society. Making decisions within a single jurisdiction is complicated and requires thoughtfulness about the critical leadership challenges involved in collective decision-making, such as: How should such decisions be made? What form should they take? How should they be governed, monitored and enforced? How should costs and benefits be allocated? In this class, participants explore modern political thought, civility, and types of goods as a way to address the challenges of collective leadership and governance for the common good. **This class is limited to 45 participants.**

HOW SHALL WE LIVE? PRACTICAL ETHICS FOR PUBLIC LIFE (6-HOUR CLASS)

Ethics is often seen as something that is lacking in public officials, and therefore must be imposed on them through laws and training. Ethics training may promote awareness and compliance, but it does not promote ethical excellence. In this class, participants explore the advantages and limitations of codified ethics; how values, morality, virtue, character and obligations play out in everyday decision-making; why ethical dilemmas arise and how we resolve them; virtues and temptations of leadership; and how public service constitutes a moral and ethical enterprise for public leaders. **This class is limited to 45 participants.**



Elective Classes

ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS (NEW) (6-HOUR CLASS)

Homelessness continues to evolve, presenting complex challenges for local governments. Participants will explore roles, responsibilities and supportive efforts required of elected officials and city managers/assistant city managers, with a sharp focus on understanding complexities, finding practical solutions, seeking local strategies, and identifying effective community actions. This interactive, solutions-focused class equips municipal officials with clearer understanding of the changing landscape of homelessness, including its root causes, funding mechanisms, and legal considerations. Participants will explore practical, community-based strategies being used across Georgia and engage in structured activities that promote local planning, partnership development, and policy response. Emphasis will be placed on scalable solutions and actionable steps that municipal leaders can implement within their own jurisdictions. **This class includes some content from the previous three-hour class, “Current Issues Class: Understanding, Funding and Fighting the New Face of Homelessness in Georgia.” As this class has expanded and new content, those who previously took the three-hour class on homelessness can take this class and receive credit towards a training certificate.**

ADVANCING GEORGIA’S RESPONSE TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING (NEW) (6-HOUR CLASS)

Human trafficking is a crime that affects every community, and it is happening in Georgia. The role of local governments is crucial in being able to effectively recognize, respond, and prevent this multifaceted issue and protect local communities. By covering the complete range of awareness to action, this class will allow participants to dive deep into the intricacies of human trafficking in all its forms, describe key elements of victimology, understand trafficking recruitment strategies, and recognize vulnerabilities in any community. Additionally, participants will understand Georgia’s anti-trafficking network and resources and how to get involved, as



John Howard

MAYOR
MONROE

“Attending the 2025 Robert E. Knox, Jr. Municipal Leadership Institute was an incredible experience. I gained invaluable tools to better serve our community and discovered more about my leadership strengths and areas for growth. The intensive leadership development course truly enhanced my skills—and those of everyone in the class. I’m grateful to the Georgia Municipal Association and the Carl Vinson Institute of Government for their commitment to educating public servants and making life better for all Georgians.”

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well as be empowered to advocate for innovative projects and solutions to combat this crime in their own communities. **This class includes some content from the previous three-hour class, “Human Trafficking: Georgia’s Role and Response.” As this class has expanded and new content, those who previously took the three-hour class on human trafficking can take this class and receive credit towards a training certificate.**

BEYOND THE BELTWAY: INFLUENCING FEDERAL POLICY THROUGH GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT (3-HOUR CLASS)

Decisions made in Washington, D.C. on issues ranging from environmental regulations to tax reform and the federal budget have a direct impact on municipal operations. Federal policies may create unfunded mandates and result in unintended consequences. Local officials have a key role in influencing federal policy. By sharing information with federal leaders about local challenges and needs, federal leaders can make more informed decisions. This class provides information about Congress, federal agencies, and how municipal officials can engage most effectively with leaders at the federal level to advocate for municipal priorities. Participants obtain tips for communicating with members of Congress and engage in role-playing exercises to hone their negotiating skills.

BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN CITIES AND COLLEGES (3-HOUR CLASS)

This class is designed for municipal officials who serve cities with at least one college/university in its boundary. It will introduce participants to the formal practice of town and gown relations. Participants will learn tactics to help address the challenges colleges/universities present, build mutually beneficial relationships and ease past tensions with college/university stakeholders.

BUILDING COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS TO SOLVE COMMUNITY CHALLENGES (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class examines the importance of valuing, building, and nurturing key relationships for Georgia’s cities with counties, school systems, public health agencies, healthcare systems, and relevant not-for-profit organizations. Municipalities are increasingly playing the role of convener of partners for thorny community problems. Beyond the technical aspects that support collaborative relationships, optimal efforts require key community leadership

competencies in order to effectively develop and maintain the relationships. Building community-based collaborative relationships is more intentional than regional relationships. The legal requirements that mandate, encourage, or limit some of these relationships will be explained and the differences identified. The various instruments and vehicles that offer or require opportunities for cooperation will be outlined, and the importance of building collaborative relationships will be fully explored. The class also includes an overview of best practices for leadership relationships and steps leading to good community partner relations, as well as barriers to good relations. Resources that are available to improve these relationships will also be presented.

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY THROUGH TOURISM (6-HOUR CLASS)

It is important to learn about tourism’s benefit to our economy in creating jobs, attracting businesses, developing new attractions, bolstering new market segments, enhancing quality of life and inspiring creativity. This class features discussions about what local officials can do to create a cohesive community tourism-based economy through: working with partners; policies that support tourism; navigating through crises, funding sources available for tourism projects; and best practices from around the state. Presentations of real-life success stories will enhance your learning experience and help you think about ways to build community capacity through tourism!

BUILDING A HOMETOWN CONNECTION: GMA LOBBYING 101 (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class provides an overview of the state legislative process and helps city officials understand how they can be effective advocates of issues important to their community and cities throughout the state. Participants receive ideas for establishing productive year round relationships with members of the General Assembly as well as practical lobbying tips they can use during the legislative session. The class also includes a hands-on exercise using real-life legislative scenarios.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (3-HOUR CLASS)

Capital assets are essential for service delivery in local governments. All governments should have a comprehensive capital

improvement program (CIP) to renew and replace these capital assets. The class provides an overview of a CIP, including how a CIP is included in the annual budget. In addition, creating a CIP, incorporating capital asset requests and the decision-making process are discussed. Finally, discussion includes considerations in funding capital asset improvements.

Capital Improvement Program is also offered as an online class

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND BEST PRACTICES (3-HOUR CLASS)

Georgia’s demographics are constantly shifting, impacting cities. Georgia’s population is getting older and increasingly representing the cultures of many nationalities and many interests. This class examines the cultural and aging trends in Georgia and explores the implications of these changing demographics for cities, both in terms of challenges and opportunities.

CREATING A DOWNTOWN RENAISSANCE: ADVANCED DDA TRAINING (6-HOUR CLASS)

Pre-requisite: Downtown Development Authority Basic Training This class builds on the Downtown Development Authority Basic Training class with an emphasis on applying downtown development tools. The importance of developing a downtown vision and a plan are discussed. Attendees also hear the basics of navigating Business Improvement Districts, Community Improvement Districts, Tax Allocation Districts, Historic Preservation Tax Credits, the Redevelopment Powers Act and Urban Redevelopment Law. Best practice examples of utilizing federal, state and local partnerships, programs and incentives are shared. Class participants are given an opportunity to immediately apply the tools and programs highlighted in the class through a case study exercise.

CURRENT ISSUES CLASS: HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES — IMPACTFUL LOCAL DECISION-MAKING TO ENSURE HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES (6-HOUR CLASS)

Decisions made at the local level can have positive and negative impacts on the health and wellbeing of a community, as demonstrated during the COVID-19 Pandemic. In this class, participants will learn about how the Health in All Policies (HiAP) approach to decision-making can be applied in cities of all sizes. HiAP recognizes

that many factors beyond access to healthcare impact health and wellbeing. These factors include educational attainment, housing, transportation options, neighborhood safety, food insecurity and scarcity, and access to parks and recreation, among others. Examples of how the HiAP approach has been used in Georgia cities include: 1) addressing pedestrian safety through the Vision Zero program to decrease traffic deaths; 2) improving police/community relations; 3) changing planning and zoning regulations to improve health outcomes and housing stability; and 4) meeting state and federal accreditation requirements for local police departments. During the class, city officials will learn about the Social Determinants of Health and acquire the skills and knowledge to find and utilize appropriate data sources and build partnerships with public health partners and other stakeholders to achieve common goals.

CURRENT ISSUES CLASS: MUNICIPAL LAW UPDATE 2026 (3-HOUR CLASS)

This class updates attendees on legislation and judicial decisions affecting municipal governments. The goal of this class is to provide attendees with a detailed understanding of changes to laws affecting municipalities. **Those who have taken Municipal Law Update in previous years can take this class and earn credit.**

CURRENT ISSUES CLASS: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (6-HOUR CLASS)

This class provides participants with information pertaining to local government and statewide workforce trends in Georgia. The class explores the roles of elected officials, stakeholders, and key partners at all levels of government and education in addressing workforce challenges and opportunities throughout our state. Resources and strategies to build partnerships for action are also discussed.



**DATA LITERACY AND STORYTELLING FOR CITIES
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

Is that a fact? How do I know? Data are critical to helping local leaders make wise and strategic decisions. Local governments have gigabytes of data but often don't know how to use their data effectively or how to visualize and interpret the data they do have. This class focuses on the importance of having a basic understanding of data literacy geared towards the needs of local government officials. This class will expose officials to data literacy, storytelling and performance management topics. Participants will receive tips, tools and other resources for interacting, interpreting and presenting data.

**DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
BASIC TRAINING
(8-HOUR CLASS – 6-HOUR CREDIT)**

This class is primarily directed at those who serve on Downtown Development Authorities, but it is open to all city officials. Topics include: the management of downtown as a valuable resource; the role of the authority, board members and staff; DDA laws; and the day-to-day operations of a Downtown Development Authority. **This class is limited to 50 participants.**

**ECONOMICS OF EDUCATION
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

This class provides specific and tangible evidence that education is vitally important to a community's prosperity. The class reinforces the critical role of businesses and the entire community in building a strong workforce and positive economic climate through improved education. Data will be presented indicating where Georgia stands in its ability to raise the bar on student achievement. Additionally, the class will present the correlation between a quality education and a community's ability to attract good-paying jobs and enhance its quality of life. Participants also learn where to find school performance indicators for their community.

**EFFECTIVE BRANDING AND MARKETING
STRATEGIES FOR MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENTS
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

Branding and marketing are critical components of economic and community development that set healthy, thriving cities apart in the minds of residents and visitors. Discover how to effectively differentiate your community, gain a better understanding of how

to build synergy and excitement, and tell your compelling story by applying best practices of branding and marketing. Key components include: marketing your assets, building a distinctive brand message and identity, utilizing strategic marketing approaches, and using effective tools and techniques for impactful results and return on investment (ROI).

**EFFECTIVE PRACTICES FOR MUNICIPAL
OPERATIONS
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

This class targets municipal elected officials from small communities and newly elected officials and exposes them to various fundamental principles for having a professionally managed city. The class examines basic management strategies and analyzes tools and processes needed to create an organizational climate of excellence for the effective delivery of municipal services. In addition, the class identifies emerging issues and other challenges that can impede effective municipal operations.

**EMPLOYEE BENEFITS 101 (RETIREMENT)
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

This class targets municipal elected officials and staff. It provides a general overview of retirement plans that cities can offer to employees and explains the differences between various plan types, such as defined benefit, defined contribution and deferred compensation plans and how these plans function and are administered.

**ENTREPRENEUR FRIENDLY CITIES
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

This class targets municipal elected officials, city management, community development specialists, economic development professionals and planning and zoning staff. The class highlights the critical role economic development plays in our cities' growth while highlighting the purpose current ordinances and policies play in the contribution of or hindrance towards business development. Pulling from real-life examples, a panel of practitioners provides attendees with both statewide and local perspectives, sharing their success stories, challenges and endorsements for how class participants can address the needs of their city's business community. In addition, the class identifies and addresses emerging impediments and statewide trends that can negatively impact the growth and development of a city.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

City officials are faced with myriad environmental challenges that affect quality of life, public health and economic vitality. This class explores some of the most pressing environmental issues Georgia's cities currently face – such as water quality, water quantity, energy conservation and hazardous waste – and ways municipal officials are finding to solve them. The class focuses on projects such as green infrastructure, energy efficiency measures, electric vehicles, and brownfields redevelopment that promote both environmental sustainability as well as community revitalization. Additional topics include principles of "sustainability leadership," how to get citizens engaged and how to communicate and promote a sustainability message.

**EVOLVING WITH TECHNOLOGY: KEY INSIGHTS (NEW)
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

Technology is a driving force in modern municipal governance, enabling smarter decision-making, stronger citizen engagement, and improved service delivery. This class is designed to help mayors, councilmembers, and local government leaders understand and navigate the evolving technology landscape. With a focus on emerging tools such as artificial intelligence (AI), cybersecurity strategies, smart city applications, and communication platforms, this class moves beyond a basic overview to provide meaningful discussion, practical examples, and hands-on exercises. Participants will have expanded time for dialogue, policy exploration, and small group activities. Emphasis will be placed on the leadership role of elected officials in setting strategic direction, supporting staff, and ensuring ethical, transparent, and secure adoption of technology in their communities. **This class includes some content from the previous three-hour class, "New and Emerging Technology for Cities." As this class has expanded and new content, those who previously took the three-hour class on technology can take this class and receive credit towards a training certificate.**

**EXCELLENCE IN CUSTOMER SERVICE
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

This class provides valuable information for elected officials and staff relating to the proper role that customer service plays in local government. Participants will explore ways to move from average customer service to excellent customer service. Participants

examine internal policies and procedures that hamper and support customer service at its best. The class instructor guides officials in defining and communicating the customer service organizational culture of their respective cities.

**FIRE AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

This class exposes city officials to some of the basic concepts involved in providing municipal fire suppression, fire prevention and emergency medical services. In addition to reviewing applicable laws and codes, the class covers emerging issues and new technologies.

**FUNDING AND PROGRAMMING TRANSPORTATION
PROJECTS IN YOUR COMMUNITY
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

Funding local transportation projects is a complex process with many federal, state, regional and local stakeholders. Changing project requirements and shifting political priorities can further complicate the process. This class will help participants understand the full array of transportation funding options for road, bridge, transit, sidewalk, trail and bike lane projects that are available in Georgia. Information will be provided on the advantages/disadvantages of each funding option, limitations (if there are any), key partners and time frames for application and/or expenditure. Class discussion will include key components of project management, including public engagement, project design, right-of-way acquisition, public utility relocation, construction start and conclusion. Additionally, a panel of transportation funding experts will help participants understand the importance of developing a comprehensive transportation funding plan based on sound processes and best practices.

**GEORGIA ACADEMY FOR ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
(MULTI-DAY CLASS – 12-HOUR CREDIT)**

This multi-day program is conducted by the Georgia Academy for Economic Development. Participants will enhance their collaborative leadership skills while learning what essential elements must be invested in for a community to experience a vibrant economy and manageable growth. Completion of "The Essentials" class and three advanced topic classes are required for graduation from The Academy. For information on this program, please contact Kelly

Lane at kelly.lane@dca.ga.gov. **This class is a reformatted version of the formerly titled Multi-day Economic Development Class. Graduates of The Academy since May 2022 can receive the 12-hour credit, including those who graduated under the previous format.**

**HEART AND SOUL DOWNTOWN WORKSHOP
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

This six-hour workshop targets municipal officials that are interested in downtown revitalization. Workshop participants are provided opportunities to view actual plans and projects with officials from the host city discussing their downtown and neighborhood strategies, their success stories and their lessons learned. The workshop includes formal presentations and tours of downtown areas. The class utilizes city officials and downtown practitioners that have first-hand experience with downtown development. Additionally, information regarding available resources that are available to provide technical assistance and downtown incentives are provided. **This class is limited to 40 participants.**

**HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR CITIES —
PART MOBILE WORKSHOP
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

This class provides officials with information about housing needs and issues, as well as programs and resources available to assist communities in the area of housing. The class format is a combination of classroom and mobile workshop. The mobile workshop highlights one or more successful local housing development(s) and provides participants the opportunity to see first-hand how some of the resources and programs described during the classroom session have been utilized.

**HOW TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN YOUNG
PROFESSIONALS IN YOUR TOWN
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

There are approximately 79 million millennials (born between 1981- 1996) in the U.S. today, according to Pew Research, and they are currently transforming American life, including the workforce, schools, housing, transportation and technology. This class is designed to help participants understand the economic, cultural and civic benefits and challenges to a city that is attractive to young professionals. The class includes discussion on the different generations, including the youngest adults, Generation Z, born

between 1997-2012, who are currently in the workforce and what sets them apart. In small group sessions, participants will be asked to express various traits they believe each generation possesses and identify their community’s existing assets that could attract young professionals. A panel discussion will provide participants with successful examples of public policy, engagement, promotion, lifestyle enhancement and community design cities have used to attract and retain young professionals.

**LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES: TRENDS AND
BEST PRACTICES
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

This class familiarizes municipal officials with the basic concepts of law enforcement. In addition to reviewing applicable laws, funding mechanisms and staffing models, the class addresses emerging public safety issues, trends and innovations.

**LET’S GET SOCIAL (SOCIAL MEDIA BASICS
FOR TODAY)
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

In the digital age, social media has become an essential tool for local government communications and community engagement. This class examines and defines what social media means and the role of social media in government communication, including the risks and benefits of such usage. Participants will explore best practices for using social media platforms to communicate local initiatives, respond to public inquiries, and manage crises. Finally, this class helps participants determine which social media applications matter most to their organization, create meaningful content, strengthen their social media strategy and improve citizen engagement.

**LIVING BEYOND EXPECTATIONS:
THE OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
OF THE GROWING SENIOR POPULATION
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

Georgia’s population is aging. The share of Georgians ages 65 and over has increased from 9 percent in 2000 to 15 percent in 2020 and is projected to reach 20 percent by 2040. Even so, Georgia’s population is among the youngest in the United States. So, what are the opportunities and challenges of Georgia’s Growing Senior Population? This class reviews the latest data, discussing how Georgia compares to other states, the racial and economic characteristics

of the senior population, and the geography of aging in our state. Also reviewed are key factors contributing to the aging population, why it is important, and what local leaders need to know to inform long-term planning. This class discusses the demands aging has on local governments and the services they provide. Attendees will learn about resources available to local communities and the social services available to older-age Georgians. Local government case studies are provided to share strategies, plans, and considerations for use in your community.

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEBT METHODS 101
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

This class targets municipal elected officials and staff and exposes them to various fundamental methods of issuing debt in Georgia. The class examines the history of public debt in Georgia, basic public finance principles, legal requirements and prohibitions, and various financing methods needed to effectively budget for capital improvement projects.

 Local Government Debt Methods is also offered as an online class

**MANAGING GROWTH: ECONOMIC AND NATURAL
RESOURCE ISSUES
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

This class shows city leaders how they can exert meaningful control over how their community grows. Topics include economic and ecological considerations, protecting water quality, regulatory initiatives and regionalization. Promoting infill development and redevelopment, preserving land and capturing private investment are also covered.

**MAYORS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
(MULTI-DAY CLASS – 6-HOUR CREDIT)**

Exclusively for mayors and tailored for their unique role, the Mayors Leadership Academy provides an immersive learning experience designed to help mayors reflect on their crucial leadership role and how to exercise influence from the chair, not just to survive but thrive. During the multi-day program, participants engage in interactive sessions led by leadership experts and seasoned mayors exploring the multifaceted role of mayors as conveners, collaborators, consensus-builders, advocates and more — empowering mayors to lead with purpose and confidence. The Academy is held every two years, with the next session slated for 2026.

**MOBILE WORKSHOP – PORT OF SAVANNAH
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

Georgia’s deep-water ports foster growth statewide. They drive development and opportunity across a range of industries, reaching every corner of every county in the state. The Port of Savannah is the nation’s fourth busiest port and is home to the largest single-terminal container facility of its kind in North America. This workshop includes a classroom presentation and tour of the Savannah ports facility, highlighting the Georgia Ports Authority’s role and partnership in attracting and expanding businesses in communities throughout the state.

**MONEY, MONEY, MONEY ... MONEY! FUNDING CITY
PROJECTS AND PROGRAMS THROUGH GRANTS
AND LOANS
(6-HOUR CLASS)**

With limited ability to generate increased revenues from taxes and user fees, city officials often seek grant and low-interest loan opportunities to help address a range of capital improvement and operational needs. This class details some of the state, federal and foundation funding sources available to municipalities in Georgia and offers advice on how to write strong grant applications. Additionally, the class introduces some reporting and administrative responsibilities the city may have once funding has been awarded.

**MUNICIPAL ANNEXATION: GROWING PAINS
AND GROWTH SPURTS
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

Annexation is an important and unique power of city governments. It can often be a difficult and complex undertaking. This class describes the different methods of annexation permitted by Georgia law, the steps for zoning annexed territory and handling county objections to annexation. Participants discuss why cities annex property and the potential impacts of annexation on the cities, newly-annexed stakeholders and the county government.

**MUNICIPAL COURTS POST-FERGUSON II:
PROMOTING JUSTICE, PROTECTING CITY ASSETS
(3-HOUR CLASS)**

Prerequisite: Municipal Courts Post-Ferguson I This class provides a deeper dive and interactive experience into the actual operations of municipal courts in Georgia. Through a combination of classroom instruction and interactive mock court exercises,

classroom participants take a deep dive into the constitutional protections afforded to defendants and the operations of municipal courts. Specifically, this class looks at how contracts with probation service providers and judges, as well as specific state and federal laws governing municipal courts work in the real world. Additionally, this class analyzes the responsibilities of the court, contracted parties and elected officials under Georgia law, with a focus on criminal justice reform changes enacted by the Georgia legislature.

MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC SYSTEMS 101
(3-HOUR CLASS)

This class is open only to officials from the 52 Georgia cities that own and operate public power systems. Electric utilities are multi-million-dollar enterprises, and it is essential that policymakers and key staff have a strong understanding of all aspects of the service – including generation, transmission and distribution — as well as sound financial and management practices. In addition to providing a basic overview of municipal electric system operations, the class is designed to help attendees understand the role of the Municipal Electric Authority of Georgia and Electric Cities of Georgia and the services and resources each organization provides to participating systems.

MUNICIPAL GAS SYSTEMS 101
(3-HOUR CLASS)

This class is open only to officials from the 84 Georgia cities that own and operate a municipal gas system. In addition to providing a basic overview of municipal gas system operations, the class is designed to help attendees understand the role of the GMA Gas Section and Municipal Gas Authority of Georgia and the services and resources provided to participating systems. The class also informs and educates municipal officials on the continued safe and efficient operation of the natural gas system. It is important that key officials become aware of state and federal regulations and the issues of an aging infrastructure.

MUNICIPAL LONG-TERM BUDGETING
(6-HOUR CLASS)

This class is intended to serve as a follow-up to Municipal Finance I. Topics will address long-term budget requirements for capital asset renewal and replacement, capital improvements, pension and other employment benefit costs and compensated absences.

MUNICIPAL TAXATION 102 – THE BASICS
CONTINUED
(3-HOUR CLASS)

The class gives municipal officials a broad understanding of local government taxation with an in-depth look at excise taxes related to alcohol, lodging, rental vehicles and energy used in manufacturing, as well as business occupation tax (formerly known as business licenses). Participants gain an understanding of tax language and appropriate use of revenues, designed to prepare them to communicate tax issues to residents and make prudent decisions related to expenditures.

NAVIGATING THE FUTURE: THINKING, PLANNING
AND ACTING STRATEGICALLY
(6-HOUR CLASS)

All organizations and jurisdictions must respond to change, either because they happen to change, or change happens to them. This is why virtually every city and town engages in some form of strategic planning. But having a strategic plan and thinking strategically are not the same. If they were, strategic plans wouldn't sit on the shelf. Municipal leaders should engage colleagues, constituents, citizens and their community in strategic thinking to address the challenges facing them today, but also those of tomorrow. This class covers strategic planning that incorporates strategic thinking, visioning and navigating to address the what, why and how of effective strategic planning. Class participants work in small groups to discuss an environmental scan, framing goals and strategies, and developing an action plan to guide how to navigate from today to tomorrow. **This class is limited to 45 participants.**

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS AND MEET THE MEDIA
(6-HOUR CLASS)

This class teaches municipal officials how to be more effective when speaking to groups or addressing the media. Techniques for developing presentation content and delivery, as well as tips for effectively dealing with the media, are shared. As part of the class, participants make a brief presentation to their classmates. **This class is limited to 40 participants.**

RECREATION AND PARKS – BUILDING
COMMUNITIES
(3-HOUR CLASS)

Recreation and park programs and facilities play an important role in creating a high quality of life for communities. They create public

value by offering recreational activities, greenspace for relaxation and opportunities for improving the health of residents. However, recreation and park programs are sometimes seen as amenities that cities cannot afford. This class explores the role of recreation and parks in building community and economic development and options for funding.

REGIONAL APPROACHES TO COOPERATION
(6-HOUR CLASS)

Municipal governments face many challenges today in delivering services to their residents with resources that continue to diminish. These challenges have provided new opportunities for cities to work across jurisdictional boundaries to effectively support community and economic development efforts, as well as many other local projects and programs. This cooperation can be accomplished through informal and formal agreements, and partnerships may extend to public, non-profit and private sector entities. This class examines the concept of regional cooperation, tools for implementation, opportunities to explore best practices around the state and strategies for establishing successful regional partnerships.

RETREATS

Retreats provide an opportunity for city councils to come together, apart from the regular meetings, to prepare for the future. The focus may be on teamwork, goal setting or other city concerns. Each retreat is tailored to meet the individual city's needs. Credit is given for city council retreats facilitated by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government. Some cities have an annual retreat, but credit toward the Municipal Training Institute certificate program is given for a maximum of 12 credit hours.

REVITALIZING NEIGHBORHOODS – TOOLS FOR
LOCAL OFFICIALS
(6-HOUR CLASS)

This class provides an overview of the tools and resources available to cities interested in effectively responding to neighborhood problems such as dilapidated and unsafe structures, unsightly property, junk automobiles, weeds, trash and other nuisances. Topics include Georgia's Urban Redevelopment law, code enforcement and land bank authorities.



*Maxine
McClanahan*
COUNCILMEMBER
WALNUT GROVE

“The Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute has been an invaluable resource for me as a councilmember. Even before joining the council, I relied on its materials to better understand how our cities operate. Today, the classes continue to provide practical insights—sometimes a single idea helps me make better decisions, and other times I revisit notes or connect with classmates to tackle unfamiliar issues. These classes save me time, reduce mistakes, and help me serve Walnut Grove with confidence. Thank you for making my role easier and more effective.”



RISK AND INSURANCE 101
(3-HOUR CLASS)

This interactive class introduces the concepts of risk management and insurance as they relate to municipalities. The class focuses on real-world best practices involving risk avoidance, reduction and transfer through purchasing insurance, safety training, claims mitigation and implementation of proper policies and procedures. This class is designed to give participants a better understanding of ways to save money, provide for a safer environment and techniques to avoid many of the pitfalls that put a city and staff at risk. Subject matter experts present the information through interactive classroom instruction and group problem-solving sessions.

ROBERT E. KNOX, JR. MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
(MULTI-DAY CLASS – 6-HOUR CREDIT)

Named in honor of former Georgia Municipal Association President and Mayor of the city of Thomson from 1979-2007, the Robert E. Knox, Jr. Municipal Leadership Institute is an intensive multi-day course that focuses on helping city officials understand their communities better and enhance and sharpen their leadership skills. The Leadership Institute includes an interactive simulation exercise that confronts participants with the daily challenges of governing and ultimately demonstrates the necessity of communication and collaboration in achieving good governance. Participants will also be exposed to the value of understanding communication styles, collaboration and developing relationships. Completion of the Municipal Leadership Institute is required to receive a Certificate of Excellence, Certificate of Distinction and Certificate of Dedication. **This class is limited to 40 participants.**

SERVICE DELIVERY STRATEGY – EFFICIENCY & TAX EQUITY FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
(6-HOUR CLASS)

The Georgia Service Delivery Act requires each county and its municipalities to develop and periodically update a service delivery strategy (SDS) that describes how services are provided and funded. SDS agreements must outline how local governments will minimize duplication of services and ensure tax equity in the provision and funding of services. Failure to maintain an updated SDS agreement results in sanctions, including the loss of state grants, loans and permits. This class reviews the components of an SDS agreement, examines tools for negotiation, provides opportunities to explore examples of existing SDS agreements and provides

strategies for establishing successful city/county partnerships. Participants work on a case study identifying services and calculating the financial impact of each service to determine tax equity.

STRENGTHENING THE WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN & YOUTH
(3-HOUR CLASS)

The challenges facing Georgia's youngest residents are vast and complex and many city leaders struggle with how or where to begin to address them. Georgia is taking a comprehensive, systematic, and whole-family approach to well-being to ensure that young people are safe and feel safe, healthy in all developmental domains, and ready to learn and prepared for life. This class provides a roadmap for city leaders on how to begin engaging in these issues in their community. By bridging the gaps and connecting the dots to resources, cities can help children and youth reach their full potential and become responsible and productive members of our communities.

SUCCESSION PLANNING: PREPARING FOR TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE TODAY
(3-HOUR CLASS)

Currently, a quarter of the local government workforce is age 55 or older and more than half is age 45 or older. The inevitable exodus of long-serving and knowledgeable city employees could pose significant consequences to city operational efficiency and effectiveness. This class represents a beginning step for city officials to understand the value in developing a succession plan for their city to ensure it has qualified employees in place to provide high-quality services to city residents and businesses.

TRENDS IN URBAN DESIGN FOR LOCAL LEADERS
(3-HOUR CLASS)

Using the urban fabric of streets, parks, squares and sidewalks, urban design shapes the towns and cities we call home. As a multidisciplinary field, successful urban design borrows from the professions of architecture, landscape architecture, an understanding of sociology and more to form the spaces that create community, entice visitors and invite investment. Designed to give municipal leaders an understanding of the practice, history and relevance of good urban design, this class informs leaders of emerging design trends applicable in cities big and small. In fun and creative hands-on activities, the basic principles of successful urban design are taught in a manner that seeks to arm local officials with the

tools necessary to advance the principles of effective urban design in their home communities. **This class is limited to 40 participants.**

WATER MANAGEMENT — AN INTRODUCTION FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS
(6-HOUR CLASS)

Water quality and water quantity are of vital importance and can provide some of the most challenging issues facing all levels of government in Georgia. Planning to meet water needs on the local level while also considering the needs of those who share the resource can be difficult. In 2011, in response to the Georgia Statewide Water Management Plan, Regional Water Plans were adopted throughout the state that provided recommendations to help address water quality and quantity issues at myriad levels and across myriad sectors. This class provides background on that process, presents issues highlighted in the plans and discusses ways in which local governments can secure their water future. It also includes an overview of the regulatory processes related to water management and water planning.



Rufus Bright
**COUNCILMEMBER
PORT WENTWORTH**

“The Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute has been a cornerstone of my learning journey. It has empowered me to help the residents of my district, contributed to the growth of the city of Port Wentworth, and supported me in advancing into my second term.”



Training Schedule

JANUARY 23-26, 2026
CITIES UNITED SUMMIT
OMNI ATLANTA HOTEL AT CENTENNIAL PARK, ATLANTA

FRIDAY, JANUARY 23, 2026
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

- Addressing Homelessness (New)
- Current Issues Class: Health in All Policies – Impactful Local Decision-Making to Ensure Healthier Communities
- Downtown Development Authority Basic Training (ends at 4:30 PM)
- How Shall We Live? Practical Ethics for Public Life* +
- Municipal Finance I*

8:30 AM – 11:30 AM

- Let's Get Social (Social Media Basics for Today)
- Open Records*
- Public Policy Development and Implementation*
- Recreation and Parks – Building Communities
- Succession Planning: Preparing for Tomorrow's Workforce Today

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

- Economics of Education
- Municipal Annexation: Growing Pains and Growth Spurts
- Practices for Successful Meetings*
- Public Works Services*
- Trends in Urban Design for Local Leaders

SATURDAY, JANUARY 24, 2026
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

- Building a Hometown Connection: GMA Lobbying 101
- Building Capacity Through Tourism
- Conflict Resolution*
- Creating a Downtown Renaissance: Advanced DDA Training
- Current Issues Class: Workforce Development
- Economic Development*
- Evolving With Technology: Key Insights (New)
- Harmony in Leadership: Nurturing Kindness, Civility, and Transformational Influence*

- Making Citizen Engagement Work in Our Communities*
- Money, Money, Money ... Money! Funding City Projects and Programs Through Grants and Loans
- Municipal Long-Term Budgeting
- Planning and Zoning*
- Revitalizing Neighborhoods – Tools for Local Officials
- Service Delivery Strategy – Efficiency & Tax Equity for Local Governments

WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25-27, 2026
NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTER, ATHENS

WEDNESDAY-FRIDAY, MARCH 18-20, 2026
NEWLY ELECTED OFFICIALS INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA TIFTON CAMPUS CONFERENCE CENTER, TIFTON

FEBRUARY 12-13, 2026
WINTER TRAINING EVENT
HISTORIC CITY HALL, GRIFFIN

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2026
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

- Municipal Finance I*
- Building Collaborative Relationships to Solve Community Challenges

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2026
8:30 AM - 3:30 PM

- Governing the Commons: Collective Decision-Making in Complex Systems*+
- Harmony in Leadership: Nurturing Kindness, Civility, and Transformational Influence*



MARCH 26-27, 2026
SPRING TRAINING EVENT
JAMES MADISON INN, MADISON

THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

- Housing Solutions for Cities—Part Mobile Workshop
- Public Presentations and Meet the Media

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

- Municipal Finance II*
- Public Problems, Democratic Decisions - The Governing Role of Mayors and Councilmembers *+

WEDNESDAY, MAY 13, 2026
PRE-EVENT TRAINING
SMALL CITIES CONFERENCE, GAINESVILLE

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

- Municipal Taxation 101 – The Basics*
- Roles and Responsibilities of Council and Staff*

MONDAY-THURSDAY, MAY 18–21, 2026
ROBERT E. KNOX, JR. MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTER, ATHENS

JUNE 26–30, 2026
GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION ANNUAL CONVENTION
SAVANNAH

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 2026
8:15 AM - 3:15 PM

- Addressing Homelessness (New)
- Advancing Georgia’s Response to Human Trafficking (New)
- Community and Media Relations*
- Data Literacy and Storytelling for Cities
- Downtown Development Authority Basic Training (ends at 4:15 p.m.)

- Economic Development*
- Ethics*
- Fire and Emergency Medical Services
- Human Resources*
- Law Enforcement Services
- Managing Growth: Economic and Natural Resources Issues
- Navigating the Future: Thinking, Planning and Acting Strategically
- Regional Approaches to Cooperation
- Planning and Zoning*
- Water Management – An Introduction for Local Governments

12:30 PM – 3:30 PM

- Mobile Workshop: Port of Savannah
- Municipal Courts I: Post-Ferguson*
- Public Policy Development and Implementation*
- Succession Planning: Preparing for Tomorrow’s Workforce Today

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2026
8:15 AM – 11:15 AM

- Beyond the Beltway: Influencing Federal Policy Through Grassroots Engagement
- Building Bridges Between Cities and Colleges
- Current Issues Class: Municipal Law Update 2026
- Capital Improvement Program
- Effective Practices for Municipal Operations
- Employee Benefits 101 (Retirement)
- Excellence in Customer Service
- Funding and Programming Transportation Projects in Your Community
- How to Attract and Retain Young Professionals in Your Town
- Information Privacy and Security Breaches: Prevention and Response*
- Let’s Get Social (Social Media Basics for Today)
- Living Beyond Expectations: The Opportunities and Challenges of the Growing Senior Population
- Local Government Debt Methods 101
- Municipal Annexation: Growing Pains and Growth Spurts
- Municipal Taxation 102 – The Basics Continued
- Open Records*

- Practices for Successful Meetings*
- Public Policy Development and Implementation*
- Public Works*
- Recreation and Parks – Building Communities
- Risk and Insurance 101
- Roles and Responsibilities of Council and Staff*
- Strengthening the Well-Being of Children and Youth
- Trends in Urban Design for Local Leaders

TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2026
8:15 AM – 11:15 AM

- Changing Demographics and Best Practices
- Current Issues Class: Municipal Law Update 2026
- Current Issues Class: TBD
- Effective Practices for Municipal Operations
- Entrepreneur Friendly Cities
- Municipal Water and Wastewater Systems
- Local Government Debt Methods 101
- Living Beyond Expectations: The Opportunities and Challenges of the Growing Senior Population
- Open Meetings*
- Public Works Services*

MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2026
PRE-EVENT TRAINING
GEORGIA DOWNTOWN CONFERENCE, ROME

8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

- Creating a Downtown Renaissance: Advanced DDA Training

8:30 AM – 4:30 PM

- Downtown Development Authority Basic Training (ends at 4:30 p.m.)

WEDNESDAY–FRIDAY, AUGUST 26-28, 2026
GEORGIA MAYORS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA CONTINUING EDUCATION CENTER, ATHENS

OCTOBER 1–2, 2026
FALL TRAINING EVENT
BRASSTOWN VALLEY RESORT, YOUNG HARRIS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 1
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

- Harmony in Leadership: Nurturing Kindness, Civility, and Transformational Influence*
- Steering Through the Storm: Guiding Your Community Through a Disaster*
- Evolving With Technology: Key Insights (New)

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 2
8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

- Building Collaborative Relationships to Solve Community Challenges
- Advancing Georgia’s Response to Human Trafficking (New)
- Municipal Law*

WEDNESDAY–THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20-21, 2026
LIVE ONLINE TRAINING

8:30 AM – 1:00 PM EACH DAY

- Downtown Development Authority Basic Training

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2026
GEORGIA MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION HEADQUARTERS, ATLANTA

8:30 AM – 3:30 PM

- How Shall We Live? Practical Ethics for Public Life* +

Key:

* Classes marked with an asterisk are required for the Municipal Training Institute certificate program.

+ Classes marked with a plus sign are part of the Advanced Leadership Track and are required to earn the Certificate of Dedication

Please note: Schedule is subject to change.



Contacts

Please track your training progress. City officials are encouraged to log into the GMA website and periodically review their transcript for accuracy and progress toward training certificates: www.gacities.com

For further information on the Municipal Training Institute, please contact...

- AILEEN HARRIS**, Georgia Municipal Association - 678-686-6293 or aharris@gacities.com
- SKYE VAN ZWIETEN**, Georgia Municipal Association - 404-652-0596 or svanzwieten@gacities.com
- HARDIN WATKINS**, Carl Vinson Institute of Government - 336-447-5416 or hardin.watkins@uga.edu
- REYGAN CARNER**, Carl Vinson Institute of Government - 706-542-2263 or reygan.carner@uga.edu

For information on Municipal Clerk Training, please contact **CHRISTINA COLLINS**, Carl Vinson Institute of Government - 706-542-4240 or christina.collins1@uga.edu



Policies

For The Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute

1. Only elected officials, city managers, and assistant/deputy city managers are eligible for Municipal Training Institute Certificates.
2. Municipal staff may register for Municipal Training Institute classes. If space is limited, preference will be given to elected officials.
3. Only registered attendees may attend training classes. No family members / guests, please. If family members / guests do attend training luncheons (in instances where extra lunches are available), there will be an additional fee to cover the cost of their meal.
4. Municipal elected officials, city managers, and assistant/deputy city managers city managers may receive up to twelve (12) hours of elective credit for retreats facilitated by the Carl Vinson Institute of Government.
5. Effective January 2023, officials may receive additional credit hours for retaking up to two classes a year from the Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute's curriculum, so long as the recipient has not received credit for those classes within the last five years. Otherwise, credit will only be given once for any class.
6. To maintain the Certificate of Dedication, recipients are required to complete nine hours of continuing education credits each calendar year, beginning with the year following receipt of the certificate. Eligible continuing education hours include any class in the Holtz Municipal Training Institute curriculum, so long as the recipient has not received credit for the class within the last five years.
7. To receive training credit through the Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute, a participant must attend the entire class. For six-hour classes, anyone arriving more than 30 minutes after the class begins, leaving class repeatedly, or leaving the class early will not receive credit. For three-hour classes, anyone arriving more than 15 minutes after the class begins, leaving class repeatedly or leaving class early will not receive credit. At the end of class, participants can complete the class completion form online or on paper. Once an online class completion form is submitted, the participant will receive a QR code that must be presented and scanned by the instructor to officially mark attendance. Paper class completion forms must be signed by the participant and the instructor and provided to the instructor at the end of the class. Class instructors will not scan or sign class completion forms in the event the attendance criteria cited herein is not met by the participant.

8. To receive credit, the registration fee must be paid in full.
9. Participants must attend the training program for which they are registered. Switching classes can result in loss of credit.
10. Elected officials, city managers, and assistant/deputy city managers who serve on Development Authority Boards and take the state-mandated Development Authority Board Member Training through the University of Georgia may receive six hours of credit, provided they submit proof of attendance to GMA.
11. All persons elected as members of a municipal governing authority who were not serving as members of a municipal governing authority on July 1, 1990, are required by state law to attend the Newly Elected Officials Institute. Newly Elected officials should attend the Newly Elected Officials Institute within the first year of office. If a new mayor or councilmember took the class in the past and then had a break in service, such official is required to attend the Institute a second time only if they were out of office for more than four years.
12. City Clerks will not receive credit toward their certification in the Georgia Clerks Education Institute (GCEI) by attending Harold F. Holtz Municipal Training Institute classes.
13. Participants must not record, livestream, or otherwise transmit video or sound from any training session without express written permission from the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government Public Service Training and Leadership Faculty and the GMA Deputy Director of Training. Participants acknowledge that any such materials, should such permission be granted, will be the exclusive intellectual property of the Carl Vinson Institute of Government or GMA, as appropriate. Any person who records, streams, or transmits material without obtaining such written permission shall be immediately asked to leave the training session and will forfeit any paid fee without obtaining training credits. The name, likeness, voice, and/or appearance of any participant or presenter will not and shall not be utilized by any party to create new works via artificial intelligence without express permission.



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