



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When an issue of concern arises, the Key Contact may be requested to schedule a meeting with the assigned legislator to discuss the issue. Key Contacts will generally schedule a meeting with the assigned legislator in their District Office prior to the legislative session to review legislative priorities. Subsequent to the meeting, Key Contacts are requested to provide a summary of their meeting to the Board for information purposes. Key Contacts are encouraged to meet with members of the local legislative

delegation at District Offices throughout the year. MSLC Board members and Key Contacts may advocate on behalf of the MSLC with all members of the Legislature, and are not limited to the assigned legislator.

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

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

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