



Florida Regional Compact Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Compact?

A Compact is an agreement among multiple cities within a region to collaborate and develop strategies to address a regional problem or challenge. The challenge is regional or of such scale that the resources needed to address it — both human and financial — exceed the capacity of a single city or even several cities. By banding together to tackle a common regional challenge, cities speak with one voice and can leverage individual resources to effect lasting change.

How is a Compact different than a Task Force, an Interlocal Agreement, or a regional entity such as a Regional Planning Council (RPC) or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)?

Generally, the role of a task force is to bring multiple stakeholders together to produce a report that outlines a series of policies or recommendations for addressing an issue or problem. Task forces are usually comprised of appointed, rather than elected individuals. Task forces do not typically have the authority to directly implement their recommendations.

An interlocal agreement is a written contract between local government agencies that addresses the provision of goods or services, or which otherwise expresses shared responsibilities or operations between the local government agencies. An interlocal agreement is legally enforceable -- it binds the parties to specified actions over a defined period of time.

Regional entities such as MPOs or RPCs are created pursuant to Florida law to perform specific duties and functions. Their membership, voting processes, and functions are subject to the constraints of their authorizing statutes. MPOs undertake transportation planning and programming within their designated jurisdictional boundaries. RPCs can serve multiple functions, including emergency preparedness, technical assistance, community planning assistance, problem-solving and strategic planning. RPCs and MPOs can be valuable

resources to the Compact process. Cities may even choose to include these entities as partners or stakeholders to the Compact.

A Compact is not created or controlled by state government. A Compact is wholly within the discretion and control of its partner cities; developed through an organic process of collaboration and planning. A Compact is formalized through the adoption of an identical resolution by each partner city. In so doing, the partner cities express their commitment to collaborate on furthering the policy objectives of the Compact. A Compact does not obligate partner cities to undertake specific actions. In essence, a Compact is simply a formal commitment to collaborate. Partner cities retain their authority to enact ordinances or policies according to local preferences and resource constraints.

My city is already collaborating with other governments in my region on a regional issue. Isn't that the same thing as a Compact?

There is no single way to accomplish successful regional collaboration. The Regional Compact process is just one model. The tools and resources offered by the League for the Florida Regional Compact Initiative may also be used and adapted for other methods of regional collaboration, as well.

In what ways are Compacts beneficial to cities?

The process of initiating, developing and adopting a Compact involves numerous public and private stakeholders. The regional scope of a compact, and the unprecedented collaboration among multiple local governments who often have competing interests, attracts outside agencies, academic institutions, professionals and not-for-profit organizations. Compacts offer a one-stop shop for these entities to contribute their own resources and expertise. Because so many stakeholders collaborate, fresh ideas and expertise are made available to cities that would otherwise be out of reach. And while the recommendations are jointly crafted, they are scalable to individual cities' capabilities. Compacts often result in partner governments co-applying for grants and other resources. Co-applications increase the likelihood of being selected for competitive funding.

What does signing a Compact commit my city to do?

Signing a compact commits your city, as a formal expression of policy, to collaborate on the issue or issues identified in the Compact, and to not work at cross-purposes with partner cities. The Compact is not an enforceable legal contract and it does not tie the hands of local governing bodies with respect to future legislative or budget functions.

How can a Compact effort transcend elected turnover?

Since a Compact is adopted by individual governing bodies, the recommendations and policies evolve to become a part of the organizational culture for the partner cities. Elections may change the face of the policy makers, but over the years, the policies endure and change happens.

What are the steps in getting a Compact started?

- 1. Commit to collaborate. Identify a regional challenge common to all potential city partners and commit to collaborate through the formation of a Compact. It's a good idea to host an initial summit to celebrate this first milestone.*
- 2. Legitimize the partnership. The governing body of each partner city adopts, through a resolution, identical Compact language.*
- 3. Develop an Action Plan. Each partner city designates elected officials, city staff or other stakeholders to serve on a steering committee, which is tasked with developing an Action Plan to carry out the objectives and policies of the Compact. Steering committee meeting logistics and locations rotate among the various Compact partners. Once it is created, the Action Plan is formally adopted by resolution of each of the partner cities.*
- 4. Incorporate the Action Plan into city operations. Action Plan items are only recommendations. Not every city is expected to incorporate every action step at the same time. Do what you can. Work on the rest. Remember, small, deliberate steps.*
- 5. Review progress annually. Review how things are going – at the individual city level as well as the regional level. This is a good opportunity to host another summit. It will allow you to celebrate success and make revisions to the work plan as needed. An annual summit is also a great way to keep the community engaged.*

What should the Compact include?

The form and content of the resolution that formalizes the creation of a Compact is entirely within the discretion of the partner cities. Once the partner cities agree on the form and content, however, every city's adopted resolution should contain identical language. In general, the resolution should define the Compact partners and describe the issues or challenges to be addressed. At a minimum, the resolution should express a commitment to collaborate with Compact partners, to not work at cross-purposes, to develop an action plan to further the objectives of the Compact, and to develop an enduring organizational structure for the Compact.

What should an Action Plan include?

The Action Plan should cover a period of no more than five years. It is a starting point for continued collaboration to address a longer term, regional challenge. The Action Plan should delineate recommendations for achieving the objectives of the Compact, identify potential partners, estimate the resources needed, specify a timeframe for accomplishing the recommendation, identify whether policy or legislative changes are needed, and specify benchmarks for measuring progress. Each city should identify an individual within the city who will take the lead in coordinating that city's role in implementing the Action Plan, as well as any other individuals within the city who may serve on work groups that may be established by the Steering Committee. The Action Plan is ultimately scaled down by each city and integrated into the city's existing planning and programming, as directed by its the elected officials and in accordance with the city's resources and budget.

What resources does the League offer on regional collaborations and Compacts?

The League offers webinars on Compact development and processes, sample Compact language, templates, and information on potential outside or third party resources. In addition, the League can assist with communications and media, as well as planning, strategy, and stakeholder identification. Check the League's website for more information.