



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO'S

ANNUAL REPORT

2023-24



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MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR/CEO



I'm proud to present the 2023-24 Annual Report, which demonstrates the dedication and hard work of the entire Florida League of Cities staff and membership. We remain committed to our five organizational goals that guide our mission and annual and long-term planning. (See p. 3 for the League's goals.)

Advocating for local self-government to help our cities will always be one of our primary goals. Our legislative session was successful, as we passed several beneficial bills and killed others that were not in cities' best interest. Our grassroots network Local Voices United saw engagement increase significantly. Our "Quality of Life" public service announcements were viewed by millions and received industry recognition.

This year, we added even more resources and training opportunities. We continued to see high levels of participation in our ongoing programs, as demonstrated by member certifications. Our insurance and financial trusts continue to provide tailored and reliable services that protect our cities.

Our workplace culture thrives as we uphold our core values of Home Rule, Integrity, Public Service and Excellence. These values form our foundation as we enthusiastically plan for the upcoming year.

It is my honor to serve as your Executive Director/CEO. I will never stop working hard to ensure that the League offers exceptional programs to support our cities.

I appreciate all you do for our communities. Your leadership ensures that Florida cities will continue to thrive.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeannie Garner".

Jeannie Garner
Executive Director/CEO





MISSION

Founded in 1922, the Florida League of Cities is the united voice for Florida's cities, towns and villages. As a nonpartisan organization, we advocate for Florida's cities and support our local leaders through specialized events and training. We believe in local voices making local choices, which focuses on the impact citizens and city leaders have on enhancing Florida's communities. As the government closest to the people, Florida's cities are best positioned to address the unique needs of their communities.

CORE VALUES

Home Rule, Integrity, Public Service, Excellence

MOTTO

Local Voices Making Local Choices

GOALS

1. Advocate for local self-government and represent the collective interests of Florida's municipal governments.
2. Increase public awareness and support for local self-government.
3. Deliver exceptional training and engagement experiences for city leaders that improve municipal operations and help plan for the future.
4. Offer insurance and financial services and other innovative business services to meet the needs of Florida's local governments.
5. Uphold principled governance of the League's assets and a value-driven culture guided by Home Rule, Integrity, Public Service and Excellence.



The FLC continues to advocate for local self-government and influence state and federal policy to support Florida's cities, towns and villages.

LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUCCESS

This session, the League had several big wins for Florida's cities, many of which were part of the 2024 Legislative Platform set by the FLC membership. In addition to the good bills that passed, many problematic bills were successfully defeated.

Bills we supported that passed:

- ▶ *Alternative mobility funding systems
- ▶ *Ratification of the statewide stormwater rule
- ▶ *Property Assessed Clean Energy (PACE) – clarified existing statute
- ▶ *Funding for public safety recruitment and retention
- ▶ Funding for environmental resource management

Bills we opposed that were defeated:

- ▶ Short-term rentals (Vetoed by Governor)
- ▶ Sovereign immunity
- ▶ \$25,000 homestead exemption increase
- ▶ Enterprise fund transfers
- ▶ Millage rates
- ▶ Local business taxes
- ▶ Government accountability

**Part of the FLC 2024 Legislative Platform*

The FLC membership played a key role in this success by telling their stories, sharing data and emphasizing the importance of allowing cities to make decisions for their communities. Proactively collecting this research, data and personal testimony from our cities allowed the FLC legislative team to have compelling discussions with legislators.

INCREASING MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT

This year's **Legislative Action Days** had the highest participation in over 15 years. With record-breaking attendance, city leaders across the state came together in Tallahassee to advocate and testify for legislative issues affecting Florida's cities. The League held an October 2023 and a May 2024 **FAST Fly-In** in Washington, D.C., with more than 65 combined attendees.

DELIVERING RESOURCES AND TRAINING

The League hosted several webinars and workshops covering legislative priorities throughout the year and created documents related to the new legislative policy committee process. After reviewing the five legislative policy committees, most of the committee names were changed, and some issues shifted among the committees.

The committees are now:

- ▶ Finance and Taxation
- ▶ Development, Code Compliance, and Redevelopment
- ▶ Intergovernmental Relations, Mobility, and Emergency Management
- ▶ Municipal Operations



260
Legislative
Action Days
Attendees

164
Home Rule
Heroes

GROWING PUBLIC SUPPORT

Increasing knowledge of municipal government, the League continues to promote cities and engage public support for local decision-making.

INFORMING THE PUBLIC

The League updated its **civics education materials** to help residents understand municipal governance and encourage informed and active participation in their communities. Tailored for adults and youth, these new tools are invaluable for promoting civics education and encouraging citizens to engage with local government and community affairs.

Florida City Government Week, held annually in October, is a time for cities across the state to celebrate, showcase and engage citizens in the work of municipal government. This year, the League increased its efforts in engaging cities by redesigning and mailing the Toolkit for Celebrating What Makes Your City Great, sending out Save the Dates to all cities, and mailing all elected officials lapel pins recognizing the week.

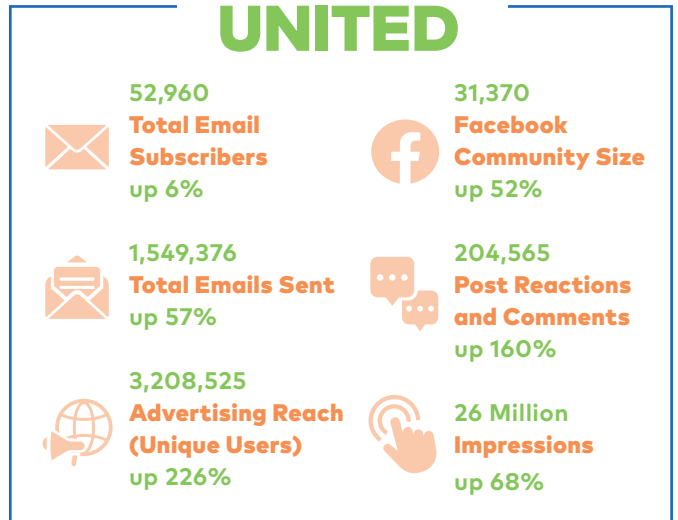
GRASSROOTS EXPANSION

Local Voices United (LVU), the League's grassroots network dedicated to supporting local decision-making, continues to grow. By engaging the LVU network, targeted advocacy calls-to-action have resulted in several successful legislative outcomes, including this year's short-term rental bill veto.

LVU's logic-driven email strategy and Ambassador program are driving factors of its increased reach.



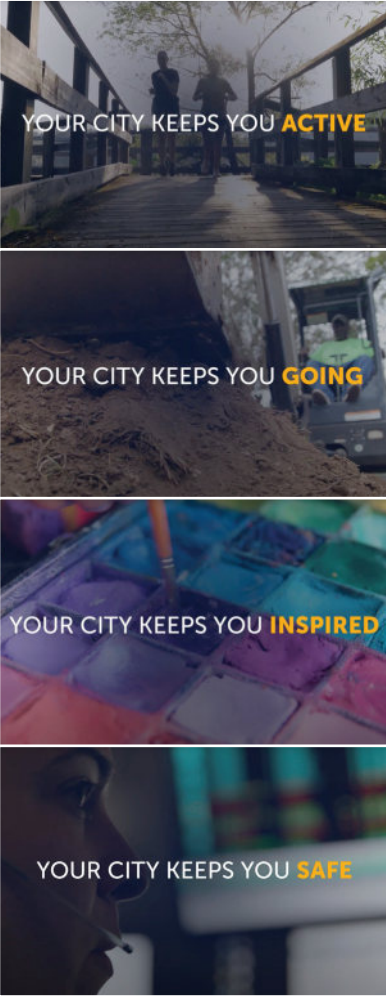
LOCAL VOICES UNITED






RAISING AWARENESS

The League's "Your Quality of Life – Brought to You by Your City" PSA campaign, which recognizes the excellent services that Florida cities provide, won two awards and is a finalist for a third.

Paid advertisements for the PSAs ensured millions connected with the campaign.



ADDY AWARD WINNER
TELLY AWARD WINNER
PRNEWS PLATINUM AWARD FINALIST

-  **1,300,000+**
Facebook Impressions
-  **1,100,000+**
Instagram Impressions
-  **1,100,000+**
YouTube Impressions
-  **213,000+**
Over-the-Top Advertising
(streaming services)



In addition to the print magazine, FLC's online magazine **QualityCities.com**

continues to promote timely stories that empower municipalities and highlight local voices making local choices.

10,085 Website Views
200+ Published Online Stories

ENGAGING AND EDUCATING OUR MEMBERSHIP

The League continues to deliver high-quality membership engagement and training opportunities that provide city officials with timely information and resources.

ENGAGEMENT EXPERIENCES AND RECOGNITION

With a focus on informing and engaging newly elected officials, the League launched a **Newly Elected Official program** targeting those officials entering their first year in office. This program included tailored communications for newly elected officials, such as a dedicated webpage, a welcome video from the Executive Director/CEO, strategic and timely email marketing, and a mailed Welcome Kit introducing the League.

The League continues to set the standard for leadership development among municipal officials. The inaugural **FLC Leadership Class**, which had 62 attendees, took place earlier this year. Reserved for graduates of the Institute for Elected Municipal Officials II program, FLC Leadership offers a unique opportunity for participants to enhance their leadership skills through presentations by expert speakers, group problem-solving activities and meaningful dialogue with fellow local leaders.

With the most entries to date, the 2024 Florida Municipal Achievement Awards recognized four municipalities for innovative programs and projects that have enhanced their communities:

- ▶ **City of DeLand** – Public Engagement Award
- ▶ **Town of Oakland** – Environmental Stewardship Award
- ▶ **City of Sarasota** – Local Action Award
- ▶ **City of St. Cloud** – Economic Advancement Award



Connect **250+**
newly elected
officials to FLC
since February



After hosting focus groups with city managers, municipal communicators and elected officials, the League created a **Natural Disasters Best Practices Guide**, which was workshopped during FLC's Annual Conference. The comprehensive guide, designed specifically for elected officials, provides practical strategies and actionable steps in the event of a natural disaster.

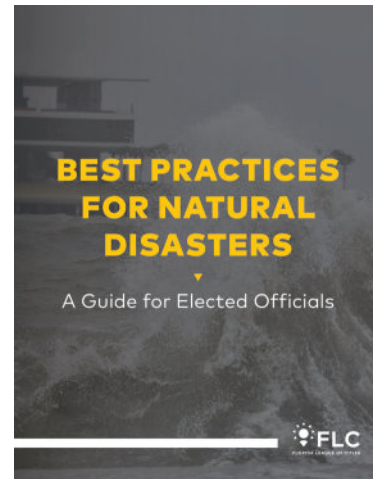
Participation in the **Certificate Program for Elected Municipal Officials** increased by 63%, with 76 additional elected officials recognized in this year's program. In total, 207 elected city officials earned gold, silver or bronze status by registering for the program and earning points for attending FLC training events from July 2023 through July 2024.

OFFERING EDUCATION AND RESOURCES

The League implemented a rebranding and outreach plan for the **Grants Assistance Program** with **Euna Solutions** (formerly eCivis) using targeted emails to communicate program benefits and value.

The monthly **FLCitiesStrong webinar** covered several timely topics this year, including:

- ▶ Citizen academies
- ▶ Municipal governance of trees – ordinances and funding through grants
- ▶ Preparation and recovery with the Florida Division of Emergency Management
- ▶ Budget document development
- ▶ Smoking bans in parks and beaches: education and enforcement
- ▶ Building trust and relationships: tips for new councils and staff
- ▶ Code enforcement best practices
- ▶ Fundamentals of social media for public officials with the Florida Municipal Communicators Association
- ▶ And more!



207 Recognized



250+ cities signed up for
FLC Grants Assistance

Nearly **90,000** grants
viewed since program began

123 elected officials
graduated from the Institute
for Elected Municipal
Officials I and II.



Meeting the needs of Florida's local governments, the League continues to offer insurance and financial services and other innovative business services.

INSURANCE SERVICES

The League held its second statewide FLC **Insurance Summit** with a continued strong presence from the **Florida Municipal Insurance Trust (FMIT)**. FMIT's retention rate for FY 2023-2024 was over 95% for all coverage lines combined.

To continually meet the needs of members, the FMIT also:

- ▶ Implemented a new **claims administration system** to enhance efficiency
- ▶ Enhanced FMIT's health insurance product through additional **member wellness incentives**
- ▶ Strategically **balanced reinsurance capacity and retention** to keep rates competitive for membership
- ▶ Launched **regional roundtables** to engage neighboring members in training

FMIT **Risk and Safety Management** recognized members' safety initiatives through the inaugural **Partnership Award**. Boca Raton, Coral Springs and Pinellas Park were awarded for their successful insurance processes, risk management efforts and other proactive measures that improve the quality of life in their communities and working environments. FMIT's **Safety Excellence Initiative** continues to grow, with 29 FMIT members earning the Certificate of Safety Excellence as of August 2024.

The FMIT **TurnKey RecoverySM Program** provides numerous resources to ensure that members are protected from disasters. These resources were instrumental in aiding FMIT members in the aftermath of Hurricane Debby.



95.3%
retention rate

Certificate of Safety
Excellence

29 Members



BETTER. FASTER. CHEAPER.
TurnKey RecoverySM
Managed Direct Repair Program



The **Hometown Health** program continues to provide FMIT health members with the education, tools and services needed to take preventative measures to maintain health and achieve a better quality of life.



FINANCIAL AND INVESTMENT SERVICES

The **Florida Municipal Investment Trust** (FMIVT) offers a diversified selection of investment portfolios to local governments across Florida. Governed by a seven-member Board of Trustees, the FMIVT contracts with the League to provide investment management, daily administration, marketing, custodian and performance monitoring services for its 55 members. FMIVT is projecting \$1.745 billion in total net assets on June 30, 2024. This is an increase of \$100 million during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.



The **Florida Municipal Pension Trust Fund** (FMPTF) offers retirement plan services to local governments across the state. Services include complete administration for defined benefit, other post-employment benefits (OPEB), 401(a) defined contribution and 457(b) deferred compensation plans. Governed by a five-member Board of Trustees, the FMPTF contracts with the FLC to provide daily administration, marketing, actuarial and custodian services, investment management and performance monitoring. The FMPTF welcomed the City of Belleview, now administering the 401(a) and 457(b) plans. The FMPTF has 219 plans covering more than 6,200 participants and net assets in excess of \$1.1 billion as of June 30, 2024.



The **Florida Municipal Loan Council** (FMLC) provides a cost-effective way for cities to issue debt for capital improvements, land acquisitions and building renovations, as well as for refinancing existing debt. To date, the FMLC has issued 135 loans through bond issues totaling more than \$1 billion to 60 municipalities. The FMLC has closed an additional 32 bank loans totaling approximately \$153 million.



People and principled governance are core to the League and help provide responsible administration and a value-driven workplace culture.

FLC STAFF

Embodying the League's four core values of Home Rule, Integrity, Public Service and Excellence, the **Culture Excellence Award** winners were Penny Mitchell (Tallahassee), Board Relations Administrator, and Tina Brown (Orlando), Property and Liability Assistant. The League recognized John Cabazares, Operations Superintendent, as the 2023 Employee of the Year.

220+/-
Full-Time
FLC positions

DEPARTMENTS:

Accounting and Technology
Executive
External Affairs
Insurance and Financial Services
Legal
Legislative Affairs

NEW OFFICERS

At the Annual Conference in Hollywood, FLC membership elected **Cocoa Mayor Michael C. Blake** as President, **Sanibel Councilmember Holly D. Smith** as First Vice President and **Shalimar Mayor Mark Franks** as Second Vice President.



2023-24 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The directors below served on the board from August 12, 2023, to August 17, 2024. Visit [flcities.com/board](https://www.flcities.com/board) for the current list FLC Board of Directors list.

PRESIDENT

Greg Ross, Mayor, Cooper City

FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

Michael C. Blake, Mayor, Cocoa

SECOND VICE PRESIDENT

Holly D. Smith, Councilmember, Sanibel

DISTRICT DIRECTORS

- (1) **Mark Franks**, Mayor, Shalimar
- (1) **J.B. Whitten**, Mayor, Crestview
- (2) **Thomas DeVille**, Mayor, Penney Farms
- (2) **Jake Hill**, Vice Mayor, Lake City
- (3) **Don Burnette**, Mayor, Port Orange
- (3) **Bill Partington**, Mayor, Ormond Beach
- (4) **Mindy Gibson**, Vice Mayor, Satellite Beach
- (4) **Sarah Stoeckel**, Councilmember, Titusville
- (5) **Louie Davis**, Mayor, Waldo
- (5) **Cal Rolfson**, Councilmember, Mount Dora
- (6) **Nathan Blackwell**, Mayor, St. Cloud
- (6) **Joseph McMullen**, Commissioner, Oakland
- (6) **Rosemary Wilsen**, Commissioner, Ocoee
- (7) **Sam Fite**, Vice Mayor, Bowling Green
- (7) **Dorothea Taylor Bogert**, Mayor, Auburndale
- (8) **Tyler Payne**, Mayor, Treasure Island
- (8) **Trish Springer**, Councilor, Seminole
- (9) **Ed Dodd**, Mayor, Sebastian
- (10) **Brian Williams**, Commissioner, Palmetto
- (11) **Joanne Ribble**, Vice Mayor, Estero
- (12) **Kimberly Glas-Castro**, Vice Mayor, Lake Park
- (12) **Lawrence Gordon**, Vice Mayor, Haverhill
- (12) **Chelsea Reed**, Mayor, Palm Beach Gardens
- (13) **Felicia Brunson**, Mayor, West Park
- (13) **Traci L. Callari**, Commissioner, Hollywood
- (13) **Joy Carter**, Commissioner, Coral Springs
- (13) **Todd Drosky**, Commissioner, Deerfield Beach
- (13) **Bob Mayersohn**, Commissioner, Parkland

- (13) **Susan Starkey**, Vice Mayor, Davie
- (14) **Joseph Corradino**, Mayor, Pinecrest
- (14) **Karyn Cunningham**, Mayor, Palmetto Bay
- (14) **Rodney Harris**, Mayor, Miami Gardens

10 MOST POPULOUS CITIES

- Rahman Johnson**, Council Member, Jacksonville
- Damian Pardo**, Commissioner, Miami
- Luis Viera**, Councilman, Tampa
- Robert Stuart**, Commissioner, Orlando
- Copley Gerdes**, Council Member, St. Petersburg
- Vacancy**, Hialeah
- Stephanie Morgan**, Councilwoman, Port St. Lucie
- Dianne Williams-Cox**, Commissioner, Tallahassee
- John Gunter**, Mayor, Cape Coral
- Dean Trantalis**, Mayor, Fort Lauderdale

PAST PRESIDENTS

- Scott Black**, Commissioner, Dade City
- Joy Cooper**, Mayor, Hallandale Beach
- Patricia Bates**, Mayor, Altamonte Springs
- Leo E. Longworth**, Mayor, Bartow
- Isaac Salver**, Council Member, Bay Harbor Islands
- Antonio "Tony" Ortiz**, Commissioner, Orlando
- Jolien Caraballo**, Vice Mayor, Port St. Lucie

FCCMA LIAISON

- Michael Pleus**, City Manager, DeLand

FLC EXECUTIVE STAFF

- Jeannie Garner**, Executive Director/CEO
- Eric Hartwell**, General Counsel
- Maclain Benton**, Chief Financial Officer
- Casey Cook**, Chief of Legislative Affairs
- Chris Krepcho**, Chief of Insurance and Financial Services
- Jenna Tala**, Chief of Strategy and External Affairs
- Penny Mitchell**, Board Administrator