

AN INTRODUCTION TO YOUR ASSOCIATION

Mississippi Association of Supervisors

Reference Guide and Manual

December 2023

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About the Association

The Mississippi Association of Supervisors ("MAS" or the "Association") is a 501(c)(6) nonprofit support association for Mississippi's 82 counties. Since its inception in 1908, MAS has been committed to the improvement of county government across our state. MAS members have been instrumental in implementing efficient and effective grassroots government that serves the general welfare not only of the counties themselves, but of the entire state.

History



Inaugural Meeting of Mississippi Supervisors Association, Circa 1908

County supervisors provide regional leadership over critical policy areas, including policies necessary to ensure safe communities, construction and maintenance of roads and bridges, protect public health, promote economic development, and plan and manage land use for sustainable development. Supervisors also provide important oversight of county operations, including managing strategies to promote sound fiscal management and to develop a high-quality county government workforce.

Since 1908, MAS has served as a nonpartisan

forum for county officials to address critical issues facing local constituents, providing a mechanism to share information and to develop a proactive policy agenda.

From the very first meeting of the Association during the 1908 - 1911 term, MAS and county supervisors have worked together to promote the interests of county governments and their constituents.

The Association's efforts are strengthened by the involvement of a professional staff who supply the technical expertise necessary to inform policy discussions and who are dedicated to helping MAS achieve its ultimate goal of providing efficient and effective governance to the citizens of the State of Mississippi.



MAS at the State Capitol, January 2019

Organization of the Association

The Mississippi Association of Supervisors, Inc. was created as a nonprofit corporation with the Mississippi Secretary of State in April 1974. The original charter of incorporation established MAS as a nonprofit 501(c)(6) corporation. As set out in the charter, MAS is specifically prevented from taking part in, or intervening in (including the publishing or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office. Simply put, MAS efforts are policy driven, remaining outside of partisan platforms.

The original incorporators, guided by the membership, intended MAS to be a "businessman's alliance for [the] better education of supervisors." That founding principle is still followed today, as the Association's core function is to support and educate county officials and others on topics and issues important to county governments. As county government's needs and responsibilities have grown, so has MAS's mission, compelling the development of a number of essential member services that have saved county taxpayers millions of dollars.

Strategic Planning

In 2017, the MAS Board of Directors seated a special committee to develop a strategic plan for the Association. The Vision Committee developed a report titled Gateway 2025 Vision Plan (the "Vision Plan"), which was adopted by the Board of Directors in 2018. The Vision Plan includes a mission statement and four key areas – or the Four Pillars – for the Association to focus development.

Mission Statement

Our Association supports, empowers and unifies all Mississippi counties through advocacy, member services, community and civic engagement, and leadership development.

Four Pillars

Pillar One: Legislative Advocacy. Since the Association's inception in 1908, legislative advocacy has been a primary goal for the Association. MAS' governmental affairs team works tirelessly yearlong to foster relationships with state, legislative and Congressional officials to ensure Mississippi counties' interests are protected.

Pillar Two: Member Services. MAS staff work continuously to identify services and programs that can help counties and county employees. The Association works with industry partners to develop and launch programs as varied as the MAS Insurance Trust to the innovative Inmate Medical and Rx Cost Containment Program.

Pillar Three: Community & Civic Engagement. The Association serves our members, and our members serve the citizens and taxpayers of Mississippi. The Association provides education and support to counties, county employees, and the citizens of Mississippi.

Pillar Four: Leadership Development. One of the primary reasons for the Association's creation was to educate county officials and foster the exchange of ideas between individuals for the betterment of our counties. Education and leadership development continues to be a primary role of the Association.

MAS Staff

Under the Bylaws of the Association, the Association's Executive Director is charged with the responsibility of the administration and operation of MAS, including employment of all necessary staff. In 2009, the MAS Board of Directors appointed Derrick Surrette as Executive Director. Since taking the helm, Derrick has added several staff positions to oversee the ever-increasing duties and programs run by MAS.

For contact information for each MAS staff member, see the MAS Employee Directory on page 13.

Derrick Surrette, MAS Executive Director and MASIT Administrator



Growing up on a Yalobusha County farm and as the son of a longtime county supervisor, Derrick Surrette developed an early interest in county government, politics, and farming. Now, as Executive Director of MAS, Derrick is deeply involved in county government on a daily basis. He works with county supervisors and officials across Mississippi to represent the best interests of counties at every level. During his tenure as Executive Director of MAS, Derrick has worked with the membership to improve member services, member involvement, and a much-

improved Association election process.

Derrick was appointed Administrator of the MAS Insurance Trust in 2015. MASIT is a property and casualty insurance pool providing coverage for over 80% of counties across the state. As Administrator, Derrick oversees policy, administration, claims and other aspects of the pool.

Prior to accepting the position of Executive Director in 2009, Derrick served as the head of the Public Policy Department with the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation. Derrick's career path has given him the opportunity to represent the two largest grassroots organizations in Mississippi.

A graduate of Mississippi State University, he received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Agricultural Economics from MSU.

Steve A. Gray, Director of Governmental Affairs



As the Director of Governmental Affairs, Steve Gray serves as an advocate on legislative and regulatory issues impacting Mississippi counties. Since joining MAS in 2007, Steve has been a vocal advocate for county government at the Capitol. He has worked with the MAS membership to bring approximately \$120 million of annual revenue back to the counties, in the form of appropriations or bond reserves.

During the legislative session, Steve spends most of his day at the Capitol working with legislators, county officials, other governmental associations and lobbyists, promoting bills to benefit counties and defending against harmful legislation. Steve hosts a weekly webinar summarizing activities at the Capitol during that week and calls attention to upcoming issues on the docket. Summaries of the podcast are distributed as Weekly Legislative Updates via text or email and are posted to the MAS website. Steve also serves on various boards in the public and private sector with governing and policy making capacities that directly and indirectly affect county government.

Steve received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Journalism with a Minor in Political Science from Delta State University before completing his Master of Public Policy and Administration at Mississippi State University just before joining MAS.

Stephanie Spangler, Director of Finance and Program Development



Stephanie Spangler has been an integral part of the Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS) since September 2014, with her initial role centered on organizing conferences and enhancing member services. In 2020, Stephanie took over the Director of Finance duties for the Association and the MAS Insurance Trust, serving as bookkeeper for both organizations. She works closely with accountants and an auditing team to draft budgets and produce financial reports.

In addition to her finance duties, Stephanie works with other MAS staff to develop innovative programs and improve existing programs the Association provides to its members. Past projects include development of membership benefits programs, launching and managing the MAS County Employee Scholarship, and several others. Stephanie currently administers the MAS Debt Setoff Program, enabling counties to recover outstanding debts by intercepting a debtor's Mississippi state income tax refund. Stephanie also coordinates the Institute for Excellence in County Government – the voluntary supervisor certification program for the Association.

A lifelong Mississippi resident with deep family ties to the Gulf Coast, Stephanie attended the Biloxi campus of Tulane University, where in 2005 she received a Bachelor of Arts in Media Arts with a Minor in Public Relations. Post- Katrina, she returned to the Jackson area where she gained significant legal experience working as a legal assistant at a prominent law firm for eight years. With over two decades of experience in bookkeeping, fiscal management and contract administration, Stephanie's diverse background equips her with the expertise to effectively serve MAS members, vendors, and stakeholders.

When not hard at work on MAS projects, Stephanie enjoys spending time with husband Joe and daughter Sarah, reading or catching a Mississippi Braves game.

Renada Skannal, MASIT Member Services Coordinator



Renada provides on-the-ground operational support to the MAS Insurance Trust MASIT Board of Trustees, and MASIT Steering Committees. Her daily job functions include facilitating the processing of schedule change endorsements, certificate of coverage requests, and coverage inquiries. She coordinates MASIT value-added member services such as liability risk management training seminars, access to the HR Hotline, eRiskHub Cyber Resources, Pressure Vessel Inspections and more. She also works with underwriting, third party claims administration and legal

defense partners of MASIT.

Renada has been a resident of Mississippi since 2004, choosing genuine Southern hospitality over the glitz and glamour of sunny California. She brings over 20 years of office management, customer service and insurance experience to the MAS team and she's licensed as a Property and Casualty insurance producer.

When she isn't working diligently on behalf of MAS and MASIT, Renada enjoys family game night, playing video games, and making candles.

Yamaiky Gamez, Public Policy Advocate/Member Services Director



Meet Yamaiky Gamez, also known as "Maiky", has been a dedicated member of the Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS) team since January 2016. Initially joining as an executive assistant, she has since expanded her role to become a full-time Public Policy Advocate and Member Services Director. In her position, she works in tandem with Steve Gray, the MAS Director of Governmental Affairs, during the legislative session. Her responsibilities include attending committee meetings, monitoring legislation, championing the interests of county

governments, and facilitating communication with MAS members. She is also instrumental in organizing 'Day at the Capitol' events and the Fall Legislative Regional Meeting tour.

Yamaiky's presence is a constant at the Capitol, where she actively collaborates with MAS members and state legislators. Beyond the legislative session, she is pivotal in planning and coordinating MAS's educational workshops and conferences, keeping in touch with member counties, and supporting various MAS initiatives and services. Her passion for her work is apparent, particularly in the relationships she builds with county supervisors and officials.

A Mississippi College alum class of 2015, Yamaiky's Bulldog spirit remains strong. When not engaged in her professional duties, she cherishes moments spent with Milo, her Golden Doodle, and has recently embraced the joys of gardening.

Mavis Seaberry, Administrative Assistant



Since joining the Mississippi Association of Supervisors (MAS) team as an Administrative Assistant in January 2017, Mavis Seaberry has become an integral part of our daily operations. Her enthusiasm for collaborating with county staff and her warm, welcoming demeanor make her the perfect first point of contact for our office, engaging with both callers and visitors with a friendly greeting.

In her progression to be the Office Manager, Mavis has skillfully undertaken a pivotal role, seamlessly providing support to our Executive Director. Her

competencies extend to assisting the Director of Finance with accurate bookkeeping and essential clerical tasks. Mavis plays a critical role in the administration of the MAS Insurance Trust (MASIT), where she meticulously prepares premium invoices, processes agent commission checks, and manages the payment of attorney fees.

Appointed as the point of reference for the MAS Disaster Relief Fund, Mavis exhibits exceptional organizational skills. She promptly issues communications to counties struck by natural disasters and efficiently collects applications for relief from county employees. Her coordination with the Disaster Relief Committee is key in awarding grants, and she diligently prepares the necessary notifications and checks to support those in need. Additionally, Mavis serves as the primary contact for county employees seeking MAS Discount Cards, proving her versatility and commitment to serving our members' diverse needs.

Educationally, Mavis's foundation in business administration was laid at Phillip College of Jackson, presently known as Virginia College, from which she earned a Certificate in Business Administration. She further honed her expertise at Belhaven University, where she secured a bachelor's degree in health administration. Her impressive 27-year tenure with AXA Advisors, LLC (formerly Equitable Life Insurance), along with her 7 1/4 years of dedicated service as an accounting and inventory clerk for

the Smith County Board of Supervisors, underscores her extensive experience and dedication to public service.

Mavis's congenial nature and readiness to help have made her a cherished member of the MAS community. Her interactions are always marked by a genuine smile and a helpful attitude, confirming her status as a valued member of our team.

Outside the office, Mavis's zest for life shines through her involvement with family and church activities. She is a steadfast supporter of her grandchildren, often found in the stands, cheering them on at their basketball, soccer, and baseball games. Her presence is a testament to her supportive and spirited nature, both in her professional and personal life.

Savanna McCafferty, Support Staff



Savanna McCafferty joined MAS in July 2021. During her time with us, she has taken on the role of overseeing the County Employee Scholarship Program, which provides educational opportunities to county employees and their dependents across Mississippi. In addition to her work on the scholarship, Savanna is a creative force behind the scenes of the Association's quarterly magazine and the promotional content for all MAS programs. She also plays a significant role in assisting with MAS's education program, the Institute for Excellence in County

Government, contributing to the professional growth of county government leaders. Savanna's dedication to program content creation enhances the value that MAS brings to its members and partners.

Beyond her professional pursuits, Savanna is a passionate learner, currently pursuing a bachelor's degree in graphic design at Mississippi College. Her academic journey began at Hinds Community College, where she earned an associate in arts degree. When she's not immersed in the world of county governance or her studies, Savanna finds solace in illustrating, drawing, and painting.

MAS Organization

Membership Structure

The Amended Bylaws of MAS set out multiple membership categories for the Association. Prior to 2015, MAS limited membership to Active Members – the 82 Mississippi counties and 410 county supervisors. In 2014 and 2015, the MAS Board of Directors voted to set dues and membership benefits for the other member categories, expanding MAS membership to other county officials, affiliate groups and vendors.

Active Member

Each of the 410 county supervisors, as representatives of "the county governments in the State of Mississippi," are Active Members. Counties are assessed annual dues based on the assessed valuations certified to the State Tax Commission each year. Active Members are eligible to vote on all MAS-related business and to hold office or serve on committees.

Former MAS Presidents no longer serving as a county supervisor are considered honorary members, with no voting authority.

Associate Members

Associate Members include duly elected or appointed and serving county officials, such as chancery clerks, county board attorneys, county administrators, county engineers, county road managers, circuit clerks, tax assessors and tax collectors. Associate Members do not hold office or serve on MAS committees and are not eligible to vote in MAS elections.

The MAS Board of Directors reviews Associate Members annually and may disapprove or terminate Associate Membership.

Affiliate Members

Affiliate Members are the statewide associations of county employees or officials. Affiliate Members do not vote in MAS elections, serve as MAS officers, directors or committee members. The MAS Board of Directors reviews Affiliate Members annually and has the option to disapprove or terminate existing Affiliate Membership.

The MAS Board of Directors set dues for two tiers of Affiliate Members based on if the Affiliate Member holds one or more of its association meetings in conjunction with MAS events.

Affiliate Partners

Affiliate Partners are individuals, corporations, organizations, agencies or associations with an interest in supporting county government and MAS. Affiliate Partnership provides vendors with numerous benefits, including the option of advertising in MAS publications, priority status to reserve exhibit booths at the Annual Convention, free publications and other benefits.

The MAS Board of Directors reviews Affiliate Partners annually and may disapprove or terminate an existing Affiliate Partnership.

Association Leadership

MAS Officers

MAS' slate of officers includes the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Third Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and Sergeant-at-Arms. All terms are for one year, ending on the last day of the Annual Convention or until his or her successor is duly elected.

The persons serving as First Vice President, Second Vice President and Third Vice President automatically succeed to the offices of President, First Vice President and Second Vice President without election each year, so long as they continue to be eligible for service. Upon vacancy of the office of President, the First Vice President automatically assumes that office and shall serve the remainder of the unexpired term.

For more information on the qualifications and duties of the MAS Officers, please refer to the Bylaws.

MAS Board of Directors

MAS is governed by a 22-member Board of Directors. One-half of the directors are elected at regional meetings each spring. One-half of the directors are selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by the membership during the Annual Convention each year. Board members serve a

one-year term, ending on the last day of the Annual Convention or until his or her successor is duly elected.

For more information on the qualifications and duties of the MAS Board of Directors, please refer to the Bylaws.

MAS Committees

The MAS Bylaws call for board committees to oversee functions of the Association, as well as the selection process for committee members. Standing committees include the Education, Finance, Legislative and Nominating Committees. The President of the Association may also establish special committees as he deems necessary.

Education Committee

The Education Committee is responsible for planning and coordinating the educational programs of MAS. The 12 members of the Education Committee are nominated by the President after his or her election at the Annual Convention each June and are elected upon approval of a majority vote of the Board of Directors present and voting at the Fall Workshop. Four committee members are selected from each of the three Mississippi Supreme Court districts. The Third Vice President serves as Chair and is a voting member of the Education Committee. The President is an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Education Committee.

Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is composed of the MAS Secretary-Treasurer and three county supervisors, one member named from each of the three Mississippi Supreme Court districts. Members are nominated by the outgoing President prior to the Annual Convention. The Secretary-Treasurer serves as Chair and is a voting member of the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee approves the annual budget for the Association and collaborates with the MAS Board of Directors to oversee its operation.

Legislative Committee

The Legislative Committee is responsible for the preparation and recommendation of a proposed legislative program for consideration by the membership. The Legislative Committee works directly with the MAS Director of Governmental Affairs to help coordinate member involvement during each Legislative Session. The 11 members of the Legislative Committee are elected at the spring regional meetings and serve one-year terms. The First Vice President is an ex-officio, nonvoting member of the Legislative Committee.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee is responsible for nominating the officers and one-half of the Board of Directors for election each June at the Annual Convention. The 11 members of the Nominating Committee are elected at the spring regional meetings and serve one-year terms.

Nomination and Election Process

MAS Officers, the Board of Directors, and Committee Members are elected in a multi-step process which is set out in the Amended Bylaws and in rules adopted by the Nominating Committee.

MAS Officer Nominations

The office of Third Vice President alternates among the three Mississippi Supreme Court Districts. The Amended Bylaws require that any candidate for Third Vice President "shall have served at least one full term as a county supervisor prior to their election as an officer" to qualify to seek office.

Candidates for Third Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and Sergeant-at-Arms must complete all steps in the nomination process to be considered by the Nominating Committee.

- Qualifying Period. The qualifying period for candidates seeking nomination begins on October 15 and runs until December 1 each year.
- > Submission Requirements. Candidates must submit a completed Statement of Intent and a written statement or platform explaining why he or she is seeking office. Submissions must be received at the MAS office before the qualifying deadline.
- Committee Interview. The Nominating Committee may conduct private, in-person interviews of each candidate meeting the qualifying deadline during or immediately following the MAS Mid-Winter Legislative Conference in January.
- ➤ Selection of Nominee. At the conclusion of the interview process, the Nominating Committee selects one candidate for each officer position as its nominee (the "Committee Nominee"). The Committee Nominee is listed on the ballot during the election at the MAS Annual Convention in June each year.

Any candidate meeting each of the qualifying steps above who is not chosen as the Committee Nominee may choose to request his or her name be added to the ballot presented to the membership at the MAS Annual Convention. *Only candidates meeting each of the qualifying steps above are eligible for placement on the ballot.*

The Nominating Committee meets in January each year during or immediately following the Mid-Winter Legislative Conference to interview candidates. The Committee selects nominees for the offices of Third Vice President, Secretary-Treasurer and Sergeant-at-Arms, and one-half of the MAS Board (11 Directors) to be placed on the ballot for election during the Annual Convention.

Regional Elections for MAS Board and Committees

MAS Active members (supervisors only) elect representatives for their region to the MAS Board of Directors, Legislative Committee and Nominating Committee at regional meetings held each spring. These meetings may be held at the MAS Office in Jackson in conjunction with legislative Day at the Capitol events, or they may be held around the state.

Mississippi counties are divided into 10 regions, mirroring the planning and development districts established around the state. These regions are: Central, East Central, Golden Triangle, North Central, North Delta,



Mississippi Planning & Development Districts

Northeast, South Delta, Southern, Southwest and Three Rivers.¹ Each region elects one Director and one committee member except the Southern Region, which elects two Directors and two members to each committee.²

Annual Convention Election Process

MAS holds its elections during the Annual Convention in June each year. The ballot includes candidates for MAS Officers, one-half of the Board of Directors, and the location for a future Annual Convention. Sample ballots listing all candidates for each position are distributed at the Annual Convention registration desk. Ballots are cast during the Annual Business Meeting. Only Active Members (current county supervisors) are eligible to vote in MAS elections.

MAS Publications

A vital role for MAS is keeping its members informed on news and issues important to county government. MAS communicates with its members through various publications, text alerts and its website.

Mississippi Supervisor Magazine

MAS publishes the *Mississippi Supervisor Magazine* each quarter. Distributed both electronically and in print, the magazine includes messages from the MAS President, Executive Director, and other MAS staff; articles, photos, and summaries of educational sessions; information on upcoming MAS events and conferences; advertisements from counties and MAS Affiliate Partners; MAS Membership Listings for Affiliate Members and Affiliate Partners; and other information important to counties.

Weekly Legislative Updates

Each Friday during the Legislative Session, MAS Director of Governmental Affairs Steve Gray hosts a weekly Legislative Update webinar, highlighting activities of the week and upcoming legislative deadlines or calls to action. The Weekly Legislative Updates provide a summary of the webinar for those unable to view live. The Updates are available on the MAS website and are emailed and texted to supervisors each Friday.

To receive the Weekly Legislative Updates, please email Yamaiky Gamez at ygamez@massup.org.

Directory of County Officials

MAS publishes a *Directory of County Officials* once every four years following the State's general elections. The *Directory* lists all county elected officials and other important personnel, photographs of county supervisors and other county-related information.

¹ For more information on the planning and development districts, visit the Mississippi Association of Planning and Development Districts website at http://www.mspdds.com/.

² As set out in the MAS Amended Bylaws, any planning and development district encompassing twelve or more counties elects two Directors and two members to each committee. Only the Southern District meets this criterion.

One free copy of the *Directory* is provided to each Supervisor after publication. The *Directory* is also sold to vendors and other interested parties as a one-stop reference for all county contact information.

County Government in Mississippi

The Center for Governmental Training and Technology at the Mississippi State University Extension Service publishes the *County Government in Mississippi* as a reference manual for county supervisors and other elected officials. The manual is a "go-to" reference book for supervisors and supplies detailed information on all aspects of county government.

County Government in Mississippi can be viewed or downloaded at MAS' website at http://www.mssupervisors.org/county-government-mississippi.

Important MS Code sections

The Mississippi Secretary of State's Office provides free online access to Mississippi state law located in the Mississippi Code of 1972 at http://www.sos.ms.gov/Education-Publications/Pages/Mississippi-Code.aspx.

This list below serves as a summary of important code sections for supervisors in performing their duties and responsibilities. A more in-depth discussion of these and other important code sections can be found in the book *County Government in Mississippi* printed and distributed by the Mississippi State University Extension Service.

County Supervisor General Powers and Duties

The general powers and duties for county Supervisors are found in the Mississippi Code Annotated of 1972 (the "Mississippi Code") Sections 19-3-1 through 19-3-85.

Ethics Laws

The Mississippi Code sections governing Ethics in Government are found in Sections 25-4-1 through 25-4-121.

Purchasing Laws

Public purchasing laws may be found in Mississippi Code Sections 31-7-1 through 31-7-317.

Open Meetings Act

The Mississippi Open Meetings Act is in Sections 25-41-1 through 25-41-17 of the Mississippi Code.

Public Records Act

The Mississippi Public Records Act of 1983 is codified in Sections 25-61-1 through 25-61-19 of the Mississippi Code.

Homestead Exemption Laws

Mississippi's Homestead Exemption Law of 1946 covers the homestead exemption process in the Mississippi Code, Sections 27-33-1 through 27-33-509.



MISSISSIPPI ASSOCIATION OF SUPERVISORS

793 N. President Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39202 Office $601.353.2741 \sim Fax\ 601.353.2749$ www.mssupervisors.org

MAS EMPLOYEE DIRECTORY

MAS Mailing Address 793 North President Street Jackson, Mississippi 39202 MAS Website www.mssupervisors.org

MAS Contact Numbers Phone: (601) 353-2741 Fax: (601) 353-2749

<u>Name</u>	Phone Numbers	<u>Email</u>
Derrick Surrette	Direct: (601) 487-0654	dsurrette@massup.org
Executive Director, MASIT Administrator	Cell: (601) 812-8159	
Steve A. Gray	Direct: (601) 487-0653	sgray@massup.org
Director of Governmental Affairs	Cell: (601) 218-5720	
Stephanie Spangler	Direct: (601) 487-0651	sspangler@massup.org
Director of Finance & Program Development	Cell: (601) 668-0671	
Renada Skannal	Direct: (601) 487-0652	rskannal@massup.org
MASIT Member Services Coordinator	Cell: (601) 918-1037	
Yamaiky Gamez	Direct: (601) 487-0655	ygamez@massup.org
Public Policy Advocate/Member Services	Cell: (601) 665-7352	
Director	D: (COA) 407 OCEO	
Mavis Seaberry	Direct: (601) 487-0659	mseaberry@massup.org
Administrative Assistant	Cell: (601) 850-6405	
Savanna McCafferty	Direct: (601) 487-0661	smccafferty@massup.org
Support Staff	Cell: (601) 668-8361	

