

MTA launches ‘Red Book Ready’ learning series

For many township officials, election to township office is their first foray into public service. After they take office, they become aware of just how vast and complex the rules, roles and requirements are for Michigan townships.

Even after years of service, with constant law changes and new state and federal mandates, it can be difficult to be aware of the full scope of programs, services and statutory requirements that township officials—as well as appointed officials, personnel and even volunteers—should know about the local government they serve.

“One of the hardest concepts for people to understand about townships is the fact that they are ‘public entities,’” said MTA Staff Attorney Catherine Mullhaupt. “Most of us spend our work and personal lives in the private sector. You may have owned a business or had special training in a discipline or profession—or even worked in another public field—but few people come to township government understanding that it is very likely different from anything else you have ever done.”

That’s where MTA’s new “Red Book Ready” learning journey begins.

A powerful tool

MTA’s ever-popular guidebook *Authorities & Responsibilities of Michigan Townships* (perhaps better known as the “Little Red Book”) is a very powerful tool and, for many officials, is *the go-to* guide about Michigan township government. MTA thinks so, too—and we’ve designed a blended learning journey to take that learning even further. Our “Red Book Ready” classes offer the same practical advice as our best-selling publication, in a scenario that allows you apply the knowledge to your own township.

The classes build off the book’s guidance, and allow us to further delve into each topic and help you develop broad awareness of township roles and responsibilities, while also reflecting changing times and circumstances. Said MTA Executive Director Neil Sheridan, “Governing and professionally serving your township grows more complex each year. We urge you to take these courses to nail down the most essential information you need.”

Noted Mullhaupt, who authored the 2020 complete revision of *Authorities & Responsibilities*, “The ‘Little Red Book’ and this Red Book Ready learning series are designed to be your initial road map in taking this journey—and help you give the best public service you can to your township.”

Valuable for new officials—and seasoned leaders

Anyone who plays a role in helping to lead their township will find these courses valuable for both their own public service, and to the benefit of their community. “Red Book Ready” courses allow you to go in-depth on specific, important township topics with Michigan’s leading municipal experts—from the fundamentals needed to perform in your role, to a deep dive into more advanced guidance that will help build your competence and confidence,” Sheridan said. “This series will help many board members gain confidence to speak with authority at meetings and cement your decision-making skills. Those preparing to step up from a deputy or staff role can certainly use the courses to build a strong foundation of knowledge.”

‘Ready’ to get started?

Each *Authorities and Responsibilities* chapter corresponds with a class (or two!) that takes you deeper into the topics covered within that chapter. Classes vary in time and depth—from 75 minutes to several hours—so you may need to take more than one to get the job done. Some classes may cover an entire chapter, or more, depending on the scope of what is being covered. Enrollment in the program is absolutely FREE. Once you’ve signed up, we’ll provide your road map, and even help you track your progress.

You don’t have to wait until we can return to in-person learning to take part in the program—almost every webcast in our Online Learning Center helps you earn credit. Our newest online offering, *Board Authorities, Responsibilities and Roles*, covers Chapters 1 and 7 AND offers partial credit for Chapters 3, 4, 5, 8 and 16! If you took that class when it debuted at our Virtual Conference, you’ve already taken a huge step. Enroll today and we’ll start tracking your credits. Missed that class? An on-demand version is available. When we’re able to return to in-person learning, those sessions will qualify, too. Look for the Red Book Ready icon (*at right*) to easily identify qualifying courses.

“Ready” to learn more? Visit <http://bit.ly/RBReady> today or use the form at right to begin your journey.

