PM

THE NEXT GENERATION INITIATIVE

A Collection
of Articles from
PM Magazine
2003–2014

ICMA
Leaders at the Core of Better Communities

What Are ICMA's Next Generation Initiatives?

ICMA's Next Generation Initiatives were created to attract a wide and diverse group of people into the local government management profession, including students, early and mid-career professionals, and individuals from other fields. ICMA's activities under this initiative fall under four strategies:

- Promoting awareness of the local government management profession and encouraging individuals to consider careers in the field.
- Helping new and early careerists land their first jobs in local government.
- Engaging local government management professionals in ICMA early in their careers.
- Building the leadership pipeline by engaging and developing promising individuals so that they are prepared to step into leadership roles, both in their local governments and in ICMA.

Learn more about these initiatives at ICMA's Career Network Web site (icma.org/careers).

What's the big deal?

Quiet crisis. Retirement tidal wave. Workforce retention and recruitment. Next generation. Succession planning, pipeline, coaching. If you haven't been hearing these terms, now is a good time to tune in. The local government management profession is approaching a crossroads as baby boomers that make up the majority of local government managers approach retirement at a quickening pace, and statistics indicate that the greatest numbers of retirees will come from the managerial ranks.

The problem? A much smaller group of young and career-changing professionals are in line and prepared to fill their shoes. There just aren't enough people.

Many candidates are unaware of or choose to ignore the potential career satisfaction that can come from leading a local government through times of innovation and change. At the same time, few current public managers consider that they are also responsible for the critical job of developing young and mid-career talent.

What are we doing?

ICMA, in partnership with a number of affiliate organizations, has developed programs to help local governments educate, attract, develop, and retain individuals of all ages, from school-age children to mid-career assistants and department heads, to professionals from other disciplines.

You might ask: What do I need to do as a member of ICMA to help sustain and grow the profession? Explore the articles here, and contact us if you have any questions, comments or ideas.

Contact Information

Rob Carty, rcarty@icma.org, 202-962-3560
Remember, intern ads are free in ICMA's JobCenter! Contact advertising@icma.org

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ICMA's Next Generation Initiatives

A *PM* Collection

Frank Benest

As an entire generation of baby boomers prepares to retire, most senior managers in local government have come to realize that we are facing a talent crisis and "brain drain" of immense proportions. To make matters worse, many of us are having a difficult time coming to grips with the retirement wave and its aftermath. During these terrible economic times when local governments are eliminating positions and resorting to layoffs, some agencies are solely focusing on budget problems and not their immediate and longer-term talent issues.

In fact, talent issues are even more important in tough times than in good times. First, as demands increase even as we contend with fewer resources, local governments need to attract, retain and "grow" the most talented and productive staff if we are to address our challenges now and in the future. Second, as local governments face permanent fiscal stress, local agencies will continually restructure and resize and will thus require flexible and ever-learning staff.

ICMA's Next Generation Initiatives are all about the talent crisis facing the profession and local governments, and to that end we have compiled a collection of related articles from *PM* magazine. The collection is a good starting point for senior managers who need to exert leadership in the face of this new demographic reality, as well as emerging leaders who wish to take advantage of a historic opportunity. After reviewing the articles,

I concluded that we need to confront three central questions:

1. How do we accelerate the development of those already in the local government pipeline?

2. How, as senior managers, can we capture existing institutional knowledge and transfer it to the next generation of professionals before we exit local government?

3. How do we bring young people into the local government pipeline?

Several of the *PM* articles emphasize the need to develop a succession plan that sustains our local organizations and helps our communities survive and prosper. Progressive private sector corporations have long used succession planning to maintain and enhance their competitive edge. To learn from this private sector experience, we in local government must avoid our typical reliance on classroom education; talent development (the core of succession planning) combines engaging emerging leaders in a series of challenging job assignments with candid coaching— not book learning.

Coaching must become a key competency for senior managers. It is obviously helpful for the emerging leader, who learns how to get things done, to navigate an organization or a community, and grow a career. Coaching is also beneficial for the senior manager, who receives

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great satisfaction and fulfillment from guiding the next generation. It is often the key to self-renewal in one's final phase of full-time management.

In recognition of the importance of coaching, the ICMA Credentialing Board revised the guidelines for renewing a member's credential to include coaching as a way to accumulate hours. Perhaps, however, we need to formally identify coaching as one of the core competencies of effective local government managers.

Finally, before we can attract young people to local government service, we must recognize that we operate in a highly competitive labor market. Thirty years ago, there was not such an abundance of nonprofit organizations, and IBM did not have a local government consulting arm. Today many young people consider working for these types of organizations as public service.

We in local government need to better brand ourselves and aggressively reach out to young people to tell our story. As part of that process, we must better fund internships, fellowships, and entry-level and step-up positions within our organizations, even as we face constrained economic times. Our survival depends on it.

For further assistance, contact Rob Carty at rcarty@ icma.org or Frank Benest at frank@frankbenest.com.

Dr. Frank Benest is the ICMA Senior Advisor for Next Generation Initiatives.

Navigating the Job Search Process

Land the next great position with dignity and ethical standards intact

by Martha Perego

Anyone who has searched for an executive-level position in the local government job market knows that it can be a daunting process. Unlike counterparts in the private and non-profit sectors, local government managers don't have the luxury of competing for their next job quietly behind closed doors.

Today's transparency standard means that at a minimum, the names of finalists will be disclosed. In a few states, just applying will get your name in the paper. The public's right to know and have confidence in the integrity of the process is certainly important. But every disclosure that you are seeking a position elsewhere has the potential to burn some political capital at the home base.

Then there is the challenge that if you are offered the job, you end up negotiating terms and compensation with an individual who doesn't have the legal authority to seal the deal. Hiring the manager and approving the employment agreement requires the vote of the full governing body.

And public processes by their very nature are not speedy ones. By the time all this takes place, months have passed. Those actively searching for a new position can find themselves involved in multiple recruitments, each at varying stages of the process.

As you search for your next great position, consider this practical advice to assist in navigating your way to a successful outcome.

Accurate resumés. For evidence of the importance of accuracy in presenting educational credentials, Google "Yahoo CEO Thompson." Misstating your credentials and employment history—yes, even omitting short

tenures—can have serious repercussions for your reputation and future employment.

Complete candor. At times there may be something in a candidate's record that is best shared early in the process and by the candidate. Better to be forthcoming as a demonstration of honesty than to stay silent and have a matter disclosed in a background check.

Free agency. Just like the sports athlete, a local government professional is a free agent who is free to apply for positions and interview with multiple organizations. The person is not under any ethical obligation to tell his or her current employer about looking elsewhere.

But as with most things in life, timing is important. If you do not wish to burn any bridges, advance notice to the current employer before the news leaks out works well. And of course, if you are relying on certain people for a reference, advance discussions are a must do.

Participating in multiple recruitment processes gets challenging as you progress to the next level. You may find yourself a finalist in two or more recruitments. It's fine to continue interviewing for any and all jobs as long as you have a serious interest in the position. Don't waste the recruiter's or organization's time if after the first interview you don't see yourself working in that organization.

If you progress beyond the initial interview, you may want to consider informing the recruiter or organization of your status as a candidate in other places.

Due diligence. Responsibility for thoroughly evaluating the position, organization, and community to determine whether it will be a good fit both personally and professionally rests with you.

Getting To Yes

The offer to join the organization as the next manager is just that: an offer. It's entirely contingent upon both parties reaching agreement on the compensation and terms. The process of getting from offer to the finish line (i.e., governing body approval) is a tango. Both parties need to be moving in sync.

Assuming that you want to work for the organization, the appropriate response to the offer is "yes, contingent upon reaching agreement with the organization." Regardless of how much ground was covered during the interview about your terms, do not be surprised if the governing body starts the negotiation from a different position. Or has an issue with a particular requirement. That's why it's called a negotiation.

Your verbal acceptance starts the negotiation process and signals your willingness to get to yes. Never start the negotiation process with an organization if you do not intend to work there regardless of how much compensation they are willing to offer.

Once you give your verbal acceptance of the terms outlined in an employment agreement or offer letter, you are committed. Oral acceptance of an employment offer is considered binding unless the employer makes fundamental changes in terms of employment.

At this point, you should cease interviewing with other employers. An interview at this stage is like going out on a date after getting engaged to be married: it sends the wrong message about your level of commitment.

With your commitment in hand, it is up to the governing body to hold up its end of the bargain and approve the agreement.

Integrity Matters

Unlike the professional athlete who goes to the highest bidder, ICMA members should not entertain a counter offer from their current employer. In a public process, you have given your word.

Withdrawing your acceptance to take more money is bad form and reflects poorly on the profession. Members who accept an appointment to a position should not fail to report for that position.

What Pointers Would You Give Recent Graduates on Finding Their First Job in Local Government?

Louie Chapman, Jr.
City Manager
Delray Beach, Florida
chapman@mydelraybeach.com

In seeking that first job, the recent graduate should consider what first attracted him or her to local government. A graduate who can match those embers that lit the flame of interest in seeking a career in government will find the search to be easier.

People who are good communicators are an asset to most organizations seeking entry-level employees. This includes verbal, written, and computer skills, as these are the abilities sought by local government human resources personnel.

A graduate's resume should emphasize the skills that have been obtained and will contribute to better communications between the government and its residents.

Be somewhat flexible how the skill set is presented to a prospective employer, because what may interest an employer in a particular graduate may not be the same factor that an individual thinks is his or her strongest asset.

Rebecca Vance, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Cayce, South Carolina
rvance@cityofcayce-SC.gov

Be willing to accept such positions as internships, entry-level planner, research analyst special-project coordinator, and jobs in small communities in order to gain experience.

The public sector is just like the private sector in the fact that you have to work your way up. There is no shortcut to the top.

Do the tasks, projects, or initiatives that no one else wants to do because you will have gained the knowledge that no one else in your organization was willing to gain.

Be like a sponge and absorb all of the information you can on as many diverse projects as you can get. To be a manager, you need to be a jack of all trades.

You will be faced with a wider and more varied range of things then you could ever imagine in your wildest dreams, and you never know when you will be able to use that one nugget of information you learned when doing that one task or taking that one position that no one else wanted.

Ron Mattiussi
City Manager
Kelowna, BC, Canada
rmattiussi@kelowna.ca

My advice to a recent graduate would be to start by getting as much information as possible about the local government. Most local governments are open and transparent, so the graduate should have every opportunity to do the necessary research.

Employers are impressed by someone who has taken the time to find out about their organizations. Set up an appointment to speak to someone about career opportunities. Be persistent but respectful, and recognize that these are busy people who you are asking to share their time.

Ask if you can visit to introduce yourself. Be flexible and also recognize you might need to consider a dif-

ferent community and accept a junior position to get into the system.

April Lynch
City Manager
Ferndale, Michigan
alynch@ferndalemi.com

The face of local government is changing so quickly that the traditional track of becoming a city or county manager has taken multiple detours.

I would encourage new grads to stay open to their career path. So many look in one direction—being a city manager—that they don't see other opportunities.

Be creative; look for unique positions or internships that give your resume depth. Becoming an assistant manager isn't the only route to a dream job. If you can't find an internship or position that suits your interests, call a local government and offer your talents.

Working for free won't pay the bills, but it will help you pave a path for your future career.

Top 10 Interview Blunders
They are all fixable!

by Heidi Voorhees

I've had the opportunity to observe at least 1,000 interviews in my career as an executive recruiter. I find it distressing when I see a qualified candidate not get a job due to an interview blunder. Here are some of the most common missteps I've witnessed:

1. **Poor initial impression.** Candidates must shake hands with every interviewer (firm, not crushing, and definitely not limp), make eye contact, and smile when entering the room. Remember that elected officials or other hiring authorities are picturing you circulating in their community. They want to know that you can project a welcoming demeanor.

2. **Appearance issues.** Be sure to wear a suit that fits you. If you have gained or lost weight, invest in a new one. Decide if you need a haircut that projects a groomed, professional image.

    Also, be aware of any nervous habits you have that may creep into an interview. These can include your leg shaking under the table, saying "um" frequently, turning red—some of these are not controllable. If you are aware of them, though, you might be able to take steps to counteract them in advance of the interview.

3. **Dated language.** Under no circumstances should a candidate say "girls in the office." For professional purposes, females over the age of 18 are not ladies, girls, or gals—they are women. Failure to make this transition indicates you are not current in your perspective of women in the workplace. Such other phrases as "data processing" can also project a dated image.

4. **Failure to answer the question.** Answer each question directly, give an example to support your answer, and conclude. If you have to ask if you answered the question, you probably have not. If you are unsure, you could say "Can I provide you with another example?"

5. **Long-winded answers.** Strike a balance between being succinct and getting your story out. If the recruiter or one of the interviewers brings up time constraints and the need to focus your answers, pay attention to this. You can still salvage the interview, if you heed the warning.

6. **Inability to convey your accomplishments.** Clients have said to me that I did a better job of outlining a candidate's accomplishments than the candidate did. This is not good. You have to be able to convey your accomplishments. Make a few notes on a notepad in your portfolio (bring one to an interview!) of key points you want to make—no matter what.

    If you have not had the opportunity to make all of your points, ask for a chance at the end of the interview to make a brief closing comment and then indicate you "have these other experiences you believe may be compatible with their community."

    We all have had the experience of walking out of a presentation and thinking about what we should have said. If that happens and you feel the omission is significant, follow up with an e-mail or letter.

7. **Failure to prepare.** Do your research on the community. Read the materials on its website, watch board meetings if they are available on a website, visit the community if at all possible, and then include some of your observations in your answers.

Also, practice answering questions you think might be asked. You do not want to sound rehearsed, but this will help you focus your answers on key points you want to make.

Preparation includes being sure your social media presence is what employers will find acceptable. Check your public Facebook page and Twitter comments. More and more candidates are not advancing due to social media missteps.

These missteps include publicly criticizing a current employer, commenting on not wanting to work very hard, or making a remark on a political issue that the employer may find uncomfortable; for example, criticizing police officers in a general comment and then applying for a job in a police department. These may seem obvious, but I have seen each of these examples in the past year.

8. **Use of the word "retire."** Do not say this word in an interview if at all possible. Elected officials are nervous about seasoned managers looking for a "retirement job." Such phrases as "staying here until I retire," or "I can retire from my current job and move to your state," or "I have one more move left in me" are not what elected officials want to hear.

They want you to be excited about coming to their community. You can say that you have family in the area and have had the opportunity to get to know the community. I would avoid saying that you have aging parents nearby and want to move closer. That can come out later, but communities want you to want them.

9. **Failure to ask thoughtful questions.** If given the opportunity to ask one or two questions, do so! If you are not given the opportunity, ask the interviewers if you can ask a question. Be sure to come prepared to ask questions that reflect research you've done on the community.

10. **Failure to exhibit energy.** This is the biggest misstep of all. You need to show your passion for the community and for public service. To quote my friend and colleague, educator Greg Kuhn: "This is not a budget hearing."

You need to smile, lean forward with your forearms on the table, and engage the group with your answers. Then, if you want the job, ask for it! Good luck!

Heidi Voorhees is owner, Voorhees Associates, and co-owner of GovTempsUSA, Deerfield, Illinois; (hvoorhees@varesume.com). This article is reprinted with permission from the online newsletter "October 2013 City/County Management in Illinois" published by the Illinois City/County Management Association.

Next-Gen Elected Leadership

by Mike Conduff

What to do when elected officials are younger than you

My good friend, the deputy city manager, said, "Mike, we have some new councilmembers. It looks like they won't have significant policy or direction changes, but organizationally we are trying to cope with a 40-year age swing with two of them. We have gone from councilmembers in their 60s to those in their 20s. What can you suggest for the manager and me?"

His question reminded me of the poignant transition in my own life from when I was the youngest around the council dais to the time when I was perhaps the oldest.

My first city manager job was at age 27. When I was hired in Manhattan, Kansas, at age 32, the mayor introduced me at a press conference as "being young enough to be my son." All of the councilmembers were older than I was.

When I accepted my 30-year service award from ICMA (two towns later), that could no longer be said.

Governing Styles

Fortunately, I had been blessed to work with a number of assistants who helped me understand and embrace the governing style change of these talented next-generation elected officials.

First, some observations and a disclaimer. While these are generalizations and therefore subject to individual variations, from my experience they hold reasonably true to form.

Young "quick risers" who take on an elected role generally work at a pretty fast pace. They are adept at juggling many balls and often chafe under a system that works slowly and carefully with long time horizons. Asking them to wait three months for a report

or white paper to be developed on a particular topic is likely to be interpreted as the administration being obstructionist.

Because they have many things going on in their lives, including family, career, fitness, and fun, they want to provide a true value-add to their civic endeavors. They are not place holders or card punchers and are easily annoyed by being seen as a cog in a wheel. Give them important stuff to work on or risk being seen as patronizing.

Authority is not something that is automatically accepted. Consequently, "Because I said so" or "That is what the procedure is" simply becomes an opportunity for them to challenge and push back a bit.

Multiple lines of quick communication are second nature to them. Technology that may be a bit uncomfortable to baby-boomer managers is simply environmental to next-generation elected officials. Often a timely group text is much preferred to a delayed landline call. Never let them be surprised by information if at all possible.

Ongoing education and learning is coveted. They want to be better at what they do next year than they are now. Be sure to provide exposure to these opportunities and demonstrate the importance of continuous learning in your own career.

Take Time To Understand

What I advise chief administrators to do is first use Stephen Covey's fifth maxim: "Seek first to understand." Using multiple approaches, find out what young elected officials' desired outcomes are for their service on the governing body.

How and when do they like to be communicated with? What are turnoffs for them? What values do

they hold dear? Is there a specific educational interest? Do they want to serve on a state league or an association committee or provide leadership beyond the local level? How much time do they want to invest?

A technique I often use in team building that works equally well for the administrator/elected officials getting-acquainted sessions is asking newly elected officials to develop a "political legacy statement." This is similar to the exercise of writing your own obituary. Instead of looking back on your life and articulating those important things, the legacy statement looks back on an elected time frame and articulates the highlights.

I explain it this way: At the local level, depending on term lengths and limits and re-election opportunities, most elected officials have between two and 12 years to make a difference. What are the truly important issues you would like to have a hand in influencing?

A Key Perspective

Remember, at the end of an official's term no one is really going to care about the color of the police cars or fire trucks, the traffic-control mechanisms at a particular intersection, or even, to some degree, the tax rate. What they will care about is quality of life, community safety, employment opportunities, and adequate infrastructure.

Most of the younger elected officials I work with are quick to grasp this perspective. Once they understand the reality of the need to focus on a small handful of important things, while dealing effectively and efficiently with the rest of their governance responsibilities, they are willing to embrace mechanisms that allow them to do this.

Finally, if you are an older manager, reflect back on your own optimism, desire to serve, and enthusiasm from when you were a young manger. Remember the awe and wonder you felt at the ability to impact a community? They are now where you were then.

Mike Conduff, ICMA-CM
Former City Manager, President and CEO
The Elim Group
Denton, Texas
mike.conduff@theelimgroup.com

Getting to Know Generation Y

By Garin Giacomarro

Instead of clashing head-on, learn the language of this new wave of workers

I'm slouching down in my chair, eyes intent on the floor, as I try to shrink away from my current situation. On the projector screen in front of me and 40 of my newly met colleagues is a popular online video that is primarily made up of questions posed by an off-screen individual and the answers of current college students.

The room is howling in laughter. These wide-eyed 18- and 19-year-olds are expecting to make how much in their first job? They expect to be promoted when? They got that degree and expect to find an actual job? I weep for future generations.

These interviews are slowly phased out by the more reasonable, middle-aged managers who are stating plainly what they expect. "If your job starts at 9 a.m. and that's when you arrive, you're late." The whole room nods in agreement. "It's not about doing what you want or what interests you. It's about being productive." Universal agreement rings out.

Understanding the disconnect

The video ends and the room as a whole moves on in conversation. I, on the other hand, can't shake the experience. Are people my age really that bad? Is there something inherently wrong with those who have never known a Reagan presidency or why Michael Jackson was such a big deal? I first feel embarrassed, then defensive, and finally contemplative. Where is this disconnect coming from?

I have so often heard the near-universal assessment that people entering the workforce these days are both lazy and entitled. Once they get to a point in their career, they expect to be handed the reward for it and for their subsequent work to be directed at their next advancement. Where did we learn such ungrateful behavior?

I've grown up in a generation that was told day in and day out, "Work hard, do good in school, go to college, get a good job, and have a fruitful life." Millions of children were sold on the idea that, if you do A, B and C, you get what you want. We were raised on this philosophy and continue to rely on it.

What does it take to get into a credible four-year university? Primarily, it relies on your standardized score. If a university's average SAT score is 1950, getting above that means you're in. It's a plateau mentality that says: If you just accomplish this goal, you get to reap all of the reward after it. It's still hard work; it's just of a different variety.

The first instinct of Generation Y isn't to plan out how to save up money every month; it's to figure out a way to get more money with one plateau-forming act. It's a change in budget or a new job. Our hard work is discovering that solution and making it happen. We accomplish goals to obtain things.

We've been told all of our lives to love what you do. Movies, parents, society, media—you name it—all of them paint a picture of having a job that is fulfilling and that still allows us to live the way we're used to. Is it really so mysterious why a college student who has lived comfortably his or her entire life graduates with an art or philosophy degree?

"Go to college, get a good job, live a fruitful life." We've done Step 1 in our plan of accomplishment. It's Step 2 that eludes us, and we don't have the skills neces-

sary to adapt easily to it. We've been taught checklists, not strategies.

Time management is another issue that generates criticism for my generation. Often times, working from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. doesn't seem as critical to us as it does to others. Older generations' instinct is to call this laziness, and for many, you'd be right. However, I'd ask managers to look at the whole context.

We've been raised with heroes like Gates, Jobs, and Zuckerberg. These are business leaders with incomplete educations who didn't become rich and famous by always working exactly eight hours a day with a 60-minute lunch and not one minute over. They did it by loving their job, being entrepreneurial, working without a clock, and accomplishing things at a meteoric rate.

We've been raised to question the traditional model, even be wary of it. Why make a person work for eight hours when he or she can accomplish everything that needs to be completed in six? It seems so obvious to us, but it comes across as lethargy to those who measure their work ethic by the number of hours worked in a week.

Tips on working together

My generation has entered into a workplace that is foreign to everything on which we've been raised. I believe that, in time, the workplace will transition to more closely align with what comes natural to us. After all, in 30 years, we'll be the ones deciding how the workplace works. During that transition, though, we are undoubtedly going to clash with managers who subscribe to a different philosophy.

Here are four important things to remember when working with a hired Generation Y individual that will help you both get the most out of your working relationship:

1. We thrive on accomplishments. Working endlessly with no goal in sight demoralizes us more severely than you might expect. Accomplishments are how we got to this job; it's how we expect to better ourselves after it.

2. Feeling like we've been left to fend for ourselves is counterproductive. We will remain engaged, regardless of whether it's for the good of the organization or not. Provide us direction and keep working us toward it. Don't throw us "at" things. Tell us what you want accomplished and we'll do it. In time, we'll learn to do it on our own, but we need a standard to refer back to for subsequent projects.

3. We are a generation of students. The truly meaningful things we learned in college, we learned from a professor whom we loved. Provide us a teacher. Mentor programs, or at least a mentoring presence, will do wonders for both accountability and performance. If we have someone we can impress, we will naturally strive to keep them happy, the same way we did for our parents and then our teachers.

4. We thrive on productive multitasking. It's when we run out of things to do that trouble starts. Keep us working or show us how to find more work. Most of us want to do right by our company and will want to know what else to work on, but if there's a void there, it will be filled by something that does keep us engaged.

My generation has its flaws. Like every workforce before us, we have lazy, immoral, dishonorable, and downright bad workers. But don't take a clash in cultures as a sign of incompetence. We're the new wave of workers, and we're bringing with us a new way to work. Help us to do it the best way we can. In the end, that's what we want, just as much as you. We just need it told to us in the language we grew up learning.

Garin Giacomarro
Economic Development Coordinator
Murphy, Texas
ggiacomarro@gmail.com

Reflections of an Early Career Professional

Challenging times presage need for new skills

By Raymond Lee III

Discussions with other new entrants into public administration have uncovered similar perplexing questions challenging our personal and professional perspectives. In our early days in the local government management arena, some of the lingering questions racing through our minds are:

- Will I be able to find a challenging job and in which community?

- Have graduate school and discussions with my professors and mentors prepared me for what I am about to face in the real world of public management?

- Do I possess the skill sets and knowledge base to manage people and lead organizations in the direction that best serves the community?

- Can I take theoretical approaches to solve the issues of today's local governments and make them practical?

- After years of higher education training for a management career, will I find personal fulfillment working in local government?

Young professionals have been trained well by higher education institutions on the issues confronting local governments and related best practices. Professors and mentors have asked thought-provoking questions regarding theoretical views and concepts of having efficient, effective, and economically feasible government systems as the foundation of any thriving community.

These concepts have become embedded in young professionals' DNA. It is already becoming clear to many of us, however, that the next generation of public management leaders will need a special set of skills to advance their organizations to the next level of effectiveness and to serve and protect residents and properties.

Challenged At The Get-Go

Coming into the public administration arena during a climate of economic uneasiness has had an enormous impact on our outlook concerning necessary financial management skills. Those of us who have been active participants in the budget process have experienced how organizations have made difficult financial decisions regarding service delivery with fiscal constraints.

We have seen our organizations reevaluate essential core services. Organizations are being forced to balance their budgets with a complexity of state and national mandates, yet provide the level of service that residents have come to expect.

We have heard the concepts of transparency, fiscal accountability, engagement, and sustainability echoed throughout our organizations. Although experiences and observations have reinforced the need for strong fiscal management ability, we have also realized the need for skill sets in the following areas: politics, capital resources, community relations, and cross-functional leadership.

Political astuteness. The concept of political astuteness is rarely mentioned to young public professionals but is possibly one of the most essential skill sets that a young administrator needs in his or her toolkit of attributes. We are observing more widely disparate interest groups and distinctly different political philosophies among elected officials and residents.

Managers must have the fortitude and skills to assist in determining a course of action in the midst of electoral position changes, diverse interests, and varying approaches to issue resolution. Emerging managers must

be able to promptly anticipate issues, identify the stakeholders or power bases that are involved and impacted, and help create a unified plan that residents and elected officials can accept as a feasible strategy among divergent interests.

More than in the past, managers will be thrust into the role of consensus building among diverse constituencies and among elected officials. Their roll will be to derive workable and acceptable solutions to issues in policy development and implementation.

Managers will continually find themselves in a position to assume the responsibility of cautiously guiding, leading, and developing policies to present to elected officials. This needs to be done without being intrusive, overstepping authority, or telling elected officials what to do.

This dichotomy of roles will definitely require the skill of political astuteness. The manager does not become a politician but is a leader from the standpoint of monitoring the pulse of the interaction between residents, interest groups, elected officials, and staff concerning delivery of services and encouraging resident input and participation.

Capital resources astuteness. Current budgets have been prepared and adopted during a time of unprecedented economic uncertainty. The real estate and financial markets are under tremendous strain, inflation is unpredictable, and unemployment is higher than desirable.

As a result, local governments can continue to experience a slowdown in revenues, particularly in such economy-dependent revenues as sales taxes and real estate excise taxes, which as we know is a major source of local government funding. More than ever, it is vital for future city and county managers to have a strong knowledge base of local finances.

Not only will future managers need to understand public finances but also the economics of the private sector and how local government actions trigger adverse impact on their profits. They have a stewardship obligation to all taxpayers to ensure their monies are wisely and ethically used. They also must stay current in the skills of budgeting, financial trends monitoring and forecasting, program performance measurement, and technological advances.

Numerous young professionals hear the term capital resources and only think in terms of monetary capital; they often overlook the significance of human capital that includes personnel and staffing. Emerging managers must acquire skill sets to actually manage the human capital and to create work environments that will empower and motivate employees to perform at

their maximum potential and provide opportunities for continuous learning.

Possession of this skill allows young administrators to achieve goals, objectives, and results that have been set for the organization on time, with optimum efficiency, and within budget. If these administrators, myself included, do not possess the technical skills and understand the importance and the critical nature by which we must manage physical, financial, and human resources, our future will become gloomy in responding to and addressing resident needs.

Community relations astuteness. Young professionals are observing the vast amount of communication required of managers. Continuous discussions are held with staff, councilmembers, legislators, board members, quasi-governmental agents, contractors, media sources, and residents. This has heightened our understanding of the need to master communication skills and to be prepared to communicate effectively in the often tense workplace and the complexity of community situations.

Even though we are young, we are being thrust into meetings and briefing situations with peers, management staff, elected and appointed officials, contractors, and residents. We have come to understand the importance of doing our homework, being prepared with accurate data, and speaking confidently and persuasively.

Future managers will need the ability to adapt to the changing cultural complexities in communities. The mastering of communication skills allows the manager to better generate collaborative working partnerships while serving in a role as community liaison.

Another aspect of community relations astuteness is the skill of emotional intelligence and acquiring the ability to manage one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to be able to discriminate among them, and to use this information to appropriately guide thoughtful responses and actions.

Cross-functional leadership astuteness. No longer can managers be specialized in one specific area (i.e., engineering, finance, public safety, economic development). Attention to the broad picture of the organization is needed, with the know-how to envision and move from vision to plan, from plan development to plan implementation, evaluating results and knowing when to modify to obtain the overall results for which the organization is striving to achieve.

It is important to know the technical components of strategic planning—the environmental scans in which the organization's strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities are explored. But it is more critical to actu-

ally possess the know-how to make the paper plan become a living document and influence others to internalize and be motivated to help achieve the strategic goals and objectives of the plan with measurable results.

Because of the many leadership and operational tasks assigned to the manager, an essential skill required is the ability to effectively multitask, organize, prioritize, and delegate tasks that are essential and must be completed in a timely and organized manner.

Moving Forward

Regardless of your generation, gender, or political affiliation, I believe there is one aspect that all public administrators must agree on, the future of our profession, and sustainability of quality local governments depends on a well-trained and prepared generation of new managers. Young professionals now entering the field of public management are gaining valuable experience, through observation and participation, which is increasing the skill sets and the knowledge base of local government.

Raymond Lee III
Program Manager
Department of Street Services
Dallas, Texas
raymond.lee2@dallascityhall.com

What's the most important interview question you ask when hiring staff (and why)?

Elizabeth (Lynne) Ladner, ICMA-CM
City Administrator
Hiawatha, Kansas
cityadministrator@
cityofhiawatha.org

My most important question: Why do you want to work for the city of Hiawatha? Working in the public sector takes a passion for working not only with people but for people. I am looking for employees who seek to do more than earn a paycheck because they also want to help people.

Every position reflects on the character and values of the governing body. Each employee represents the culture of the community and may be the first or only person whom a visitor or new resident sees when they are evaluating whether they want to stay or return.

So for me, understanding why candidates want to work for the city is the most important question because it reveals if they have the heart of a public servant.

Jacques Dube
City Manager
Moncton, NB, Canada
jacques.dube@moncton.ca

I like to investigate and then ask a question because the candidate's response allows me to gather information about the person based on a real-life example of an initiative he or she found important to an organization: "Tell us about the most significant change initiative you implemented and for which you were responsible. Tell us what role you played in it, what made it challenging. What were the results?"

The candidate's response also provides insight into what the candidate considers an achievement. All of us encounter barriers when we are implementing change and this question can reveal a candidate's drive to succeed as well as the problem-solving approach.

You can then assess whether the candidate's style will fit into your organization. You can also sense a candidate's energy level, drive, and influencing skills, which are all important competencies for leadership roles in local government today.

Kay Love, ICMA-CM
City Administrator
Roswell, Georgia
klove@roswellgov.com

The most important question that I ask in an interview is why the person is specifically interested in working for the city of Roswell. The answer provides valuable insight about candidates as potential representatives of the city.

It tells me if they are simply looking for a paycheck or if they are on a career path. It gives me an idea of what they know about the city, the community, and how much preparation they did for the interview.

The answer also helps me know if they will be a good fit with other employees. During the course of my career, I have made some great hires, and I have

made some not-so-great hires. In every instance, it boiled down to how well the person "fit" in the organization.

Joseph Gall, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Sherwood, Oregon
gallj@sherwoodoregon.gov

I have a number of consistent questions that I usually ask during an interview process, including "Where do you see yourself professionally in five years?" Responses to this question help me understand what a candidate thinks about his or her career and how the current opportunity fits into those plans.

But the question I think is the most important to ask is, "Do you have any questions for me about the position or the organization?" This question is usually asked toward the end of the interview process. The questions that candidates then ask in response help me understand the research they have done in preparation for the interview.

In addition, I strongly believe that an interview is a two-way process—as much as I am interviewing candidates to determine if they are a good match for our organization, candidates should also be interviewing me to determine whether our organization is a good match for them.

SPECIAL REPORT– Leadership and the Profession: Where to From Here

Be reformers or be reformed?

by Bob O'Neill

In 2008, as the depth and dimensions of the Great Recession were evolving, ICMA began trying to understand the implications for local government. Was this a difficult time but with a predictable recovery or a period of creative destruction when the assumptions of the past were challenged?

During the past two years, ICMA has engaged members and other stakeholders in the exploration of these and similar questions. How we answer them reveals our individual and collective thinking about the future of local government and the implications for the profession.

At this stage of the discussion, we have identified five key drivers of local government, six cross-cutting issues critical to communities, and a proposed formula for building trust with the public, especially to address fiscal challenges.

Before discussing these findings, it is important to start with the end in mind: What are local government leaders trying to do, and why are these matters important? ICMA's vision talks about building sustainable communities that improve lives worldwide. The vision statements of cities, counties, and towns may use different words, but ultimately local government leaders are all trying to build the best community possible—a community that can thrive, that is resilient to adversity, and one that people are happy to call "home."

Drivers Of Local Government

Various potential factors and variables have been discussed in these conversations. The emerging consensus seems to be that five major drivers will be the leading forces that greatly influence the future roles and strategies of local government in the United States.

Public sector fiscal crisis. To paraphrase former President Bill Clinton's comment at the 2012 Democratic National Convention, the federal budget really is about the arithmetic, and it is not pretty. However Congress deals or does not deal with immediate issues around taxes, spending, and the debt ceiling, the federal deficit will not be solved soon.

The federal government will increasingly reduce funding for domestic programs and resort to regulation and preemption with a lack of incentive funding. The federal government and many of the states have structural deficits resulting in the prospects for virtually no funding to local governments to deal with major issues.

Demographic changes over the next two decades. A number of states in years to come will have no single majority racial or ethnic group. The white population is declining, the Latino population is growing, and the baby boomer population is doing some serious ag-

ing. The United States is becoming a truly pluralistic, multicultural society.

Increasingly, members of the public have no shared experience with the Great Depression, the Civil Rights movement, or the Vietnam war. Instead, 9/11, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Great Recession, and the iPad have become the new defining experiences.

Impact of technology. Of particular interest here is the impact of social media on both community engagement and service delivery. We now have the ability to contact almost every household multiple times a day to help frame conversations. We cannot, however, control conversations.

Social media is accessible both by people of good intent and people of bad intent. We have an opportunity to engage people differently, more meaningfully, and with greater transparency. We ignore social media at our own peril.

Increasingly polarized politics. The divide in politics has been most clear in Washington, D.C., but is increasingly filtering to the local level. The challenge is to get to a reasoned compromise to move issues forward. What we have seen in Washington, D.C., is deadlock. Everyone can say no; everyone has a veto. The question is, how do we get to some constructive form of *yes?*

Increasing gap between the haves and have nots. Are we creating in the United States a new class of people who will not be able to fully participate in the economy? Will work not be fully rewarded—that is, will the American Dream be unattainable—no matter how hard one works?

The preceding five drivers appear to be of such force that they will affect every local government in the United States, and that some form of the drivers either have impacted or will impact local governments internationally. For each local government leader, the questions are in the specifics. A strategic analysis for each driver with local data is warranted.

Critical Issues

Over the past five years, we have also looked at feedback obtained from many resident surveys, trying to identify the issues that matter most to the people of the United States. Six issues emerge as most important.

Again, the status of each issue and the way in which it is framed will vary by community. The priority order of the issues will also vary. Regardless, all

local governments at some level appear to confront these issues:

- Jobs and economy.
- Education.
- Safety.
- Health care.
- Environment.
- Infrastructure, including transportation.

A discussion of each issue is beyond the scope of this article. Rather, we want to note what all six of them have in common: Each issue requires a multisector, multidisciplinary, and intergovernmental strategy to produce the outcomes that matter most to people in their communities.

While many people may see these as primarily federal or state issues, the reality is that federal and state governments are increasingly challenged by these issues both by policy stalemate and structural deficits.

Given the interrelatedness and complexity of the identified drivers and issues, what is the role of local government and local government professionals? Do we need a 21st-century federalist paper that defines the roles and responsibilities within the federal system, not only crossing federal, state, and local government but also encompassing the corporate, nonprofit, and faith sectors as well as the individual "resident"?

All of the above lead us to the conclusion that this is the decade of local government. Communities have to decide what is important to them in building and maintaining their community as a great place to live, work, and play and how they will pay for it.

Formula For Building Trust

Working in local government's favor is the trust that people have in local government, which is much higher than for either federal or state government. Residents' trust will be the working capital of innovation in communities and local governments.

Trust creates room for thinking about and testing new solutions. It therefore necessitates that local governments understand what builds trust at the community level. From our discussions, we would suggest these are the building blocks of trust:

Transparency + Engagement + Performance + Accountability = Trust?

We have tried to test this formula by looking at referenda and initiatives at the local level from November 2010 to January 2012. On average, more than 70 percent of the referendums and initiatives passed that

The Facts

Fiscal Crisis

$14.8 trillion: Amount of national debt in 2011.

161%: Amount of growth in national debt since 2000.

$52,181: Amount of national debt per household.

0.1%: Projected rate of growth in state spending in FY 2012.

23.9%: Estimated share of total state spending on Medicaid (FY 2012).

Sources: U.S. Department of Treasury; National Governors Association and the National Association of State Budget Officers, 2012.

Demographic Changes by Year 2050

47%: White, non-Hispanic population in U.S. in 2050.

82%: Amount of population growth by 2050 due to immigrants.

19%: Immigrant population in 2050.

75: Number of children and elderly people for every 100 working-age adults.

Source: Pew, 2008.

Technology

61%: Percentage of managers who say that technology has increased quantity of public participation.

36%: Percentage of managers who say that technology has increased quality.

75: Average number of daily texts by an American teenager.

4 billion: Number of daily views on YouTube.

97%: Percentage of 18-to-29-year-olds who use the Internet.

53%: Percentage of people age 65 or older who use the Internet.

Source: ICMA; YouTube; Pew, 2012.

Gaps Between Haves and Have Nots

59%: Percentage of wealth people think the top 20% control.

32%: Percentage of wealth people think the top 20% should control.

84%: Percentage of wealth the top 20% actually control.

–5.9%: Percentage change in overall mean family income from 1950 to 2010.

Source: Pew, 2010 and 2012.

Polarized Politics

Percentage difference between Republicans and Democrats across values indices based on related survey questions. For example, on the statement "Government should . . . take care of people who can't take care of themselves," 75 percent of Democrats agree compared with 40 percent of Republicans, resulting in a gap of 35 percent. Each gap here is based on indices created from multiple questions:

41%: Social safety net.

39%: Environment.

37%: Labor Unions.

33%: Equal opportunity.

33%: Government scope and performance.

24%: Immigration.

80%: Increase in overall political differences between 1987 and 2012.

Source: Pew Research Center, 2012.

Trust in Government

Percentage of people who have a great deal or fair amount of trust and confidence in government entities to handle problems:

68%: Local government.

57%: State government.

47%: Executive branch of federal government.

31%: Legislative branch of federal government.

62%: Percentage of people blaming Congress "a lot" for difficulties of middle class during past 10 years.

Source: Gallup, 2011; Pew, 2012.

Percentage of People Satisfied with the City or Area Where They Live

85.7%.

Source: Gallup, 2012.

Percentage of 2011 Referenda Approved (Number Approved)

100%: Hotel tax (5).

82%: City property taxes (832).

79%: County property tax (112).

77%: District property tax (176).

72%: City sales tax (42).

67%: City bonds (39).

Source: Ballotpedia.com.

authorized expenditures or gave a revenue source to local government.

While more rigorous and comprehensive analytical research is needed, the working thesis is that these are prerequisites for revenue referendum approval:

- There is specific use for the money; people know what will be done (transparency).

- The priorities for use of the money were produced by a comprehensive citizen engagement and information strategy rather than imposed on the public (engagement).

- A trusted agent is entrusted with delivering on the services promised by referendum (performance and accountability).

Most often the trusted agent will be a local government, school district, or special district that has a track record of success and a high level of resident trust, which includes, to repeat the formula: transparency (openness and honesty), engagement, performance (competence), and accountability (ownership for what goes right and what goes wrong).

Future Leadership Role Of Managers

All of the preceding raises some interesting questions for the future of the profession of local government management. Among the most important is: Will professional managers be the reformers or are they to be reformed?

To achieve success against the backdrop of major drivers and complex public policy issues will test the leadership capacity of both elected and appointed local officials. Leadership will have to span the normal boundaries of the local government organization and the political boundaries of the jurisdiction: (1) to match the geography and scale of significant issues, and (2) to reach all of the sectors and disciplines necessary to make meaningful change.

At the same time, local governments will need to preserve their own sense of "place" and what distinguishes their community and makes it special.

Authors James Keene, John Nalbandian, Shannon Portillo, James Svara, and I described six practices that represent the current and future value proposition for professional management in the March 2007 *PM* article, "How Professionals Can Add Value to Their Communities and Organizations." Throughout ICMA's conversations with members and other stakeholders over the past two years, these practices keep rising to the surface.

They reflect the actions required of professional managers to ensure great communities. To achieve successful communities, local government professionals need to:

- Add value to the quality of public policy and produce results that matter to their communities.

- Take a long-term and communitywide perspective.

- Commit themselves to ethical practices in the service of public values.

- Help build community and support democratic and community values.

- Promote equitable, fair outcomes and processes.

- Develop and sustain organizational excellence and promote innovation.

An Adaptation of Jim Collins's 12 Questions

1. Do we want to build a great company [community, local government organization], and are we willing to do what it takes?

2. Do we have the right people on the bus and in the key seats?

3. What are the brutal facts?

4. What is our hedgehog? What can we be the best at, with an economic engine, and for which we have unbounded passion?

5. What is our "20 Mile March," and are we hitting it?

6. Where should we place our big bets, based on empirical validation (bullets to cannonballs)?

7. What are the core values and core purpose on which we want to build this enterprise [community] for 100 years?

8. What is our 15-to-25-year BHAG (big, hairy, audacious goal)?

9. What could kill us, and how can we protect our flanks (productive paranoia)?

10. What should we stop doing to increase our discipline and focus?

11. How can we increase our return on luck (ROL)?

12. Are we becoming a "Level 5" leadership team and cultivating a "Level 5" management culture (based on personal humility and ambition for the organization/community)?

Source: From Jim Collins, based on concepts in his books Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't and Great by Choice: Uncertainty, Chaos, and Luck—Why Some Thrive Despite Them All *and insights shared in his keynote presentation at the 2012 ICMA Annual Conference, Phoenix, Arizona.*

In the coming months, the conversations will continue, building on discussions at the regional summits and ICMA's annual conference in September. We will further explore these issues in the context of the challenges Jim Collins issued in his dynamic keynote presentation at the 2012 conference based on his book *Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap… and Others Don't.* We will also explore his "12 Questions" (refer to box).

As ICMA approaches the dawn of its second 100 years, we will continue to explore, based on Great by Choice by Jim Collins and Morten T. Hansen, how can and should ICMA provide a stronger voice for the profession and assist managers in the execution in achieving results?

Bob O'Neill is executive director, ICMA, Washington, D.C. (roneill@ICMA.org). ICMA Staff Member Gabriel Brehm provided research assistance for this article.

The ICMA Code of Ethics: Values for the Next Century

Foundational values continue guiding the profession

by Martha Perego

As ICMA approaches its 100th anniversary in 2014, the local government management profession will celebrate its legacy of public service: vibrant towns, cities, and counties built around the world by ambitious and innovative leaders. Fundamental to the success of those countless individuals was their commitment to a core set of ethical principles.

First adopted in 1924, the ICMA Code of Ethics outlined the values that are foundational for the profession. A commitment to democracy, equity, integrity, transparency, political neutrality, and fairness continue to define the profession today.

In crafting the Code, the founding leaders had the foresight and wisdom to recognize that a true profession is more than a body of knowledge implemented by experienced practitioners. A true profession is anchored in and guided by a set of commonly held core principles. Those principles not only guide the individual's conduct but create a set of expectations and a bond among individuals and the community they serve.

Taking that first step to create a core set of principles so early in its infancy was fundamental to the success of the local government management profession. Today, those core principles are taught in public administration and public olicy programs, reflected in local government management practices, and enforced in a peer-review process governed by ICMA.

The Values

Keeping the profession's ethical standards relevant to the work that managers do is crucial. Over the past 85 years, the tenets of the ICMA Code of Ethics have been revised seven times to make it relevant to the conditions of the day and to strengthen principles that perhaps were losing meaning and visibility to the profession. The last revision occurred in 1998 when the membership sought to emphasize the importance of political neutrality to the profession by approving a re-ordering of the tenet's statements.

As the local government management profession approaches its second century, the time has come to initiate a review of the ICMA Code of Ethics—the principles outlined in the tenets of the Code as well as the guidelines that serve to direct their practical implementation. ICMA's Committee on Professional Conduct, the standing Executive Board committee responsible for enforcing the Code of Ethics, is developing the framework for such a review.

What Values Matter Most To You?

As the framework for engaging the profession in the formal review rolls out, take time to reexamine the 12 tenets of the ICMA Code of Ethics.

Tenet 1: Be dedicated to the concepts of effective and democratic local government by responsible elected officials and believe that professional general management is essential to the achievement of this objective.

Tenet 2: Affirm the dignity and worth of the services rendered by government and maintain a constructive, creative, and practical attitude toward local government affairs and a deep sense of social responsibility as a trusted public servant.

Tenet 3: Be dedicated to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in all public and personal relationships

in order that the member may merit the respect and confidence of the elected officials, of other officials and employees, and of the public.

Tenet 4: Recognize that the chief function of local government at all times is to serve the best interests of all people.

Tenet 5: Submit policy proposals to elected officials; provide them with facts and advice on matters of policy as a basis for making decisions and setting community goals; and uphold and implement local government policies adopted by elected officials.

Tenet 6: Recognize that elected representatives of the people are entitled to the credit for the establishment of local government policies; responsibility for policy execution rests with the members.

Tenet 7: Refrain from all political activities which undermine public confidence in professional administrators. Refrain from participation in the election of the members of the employing legislative body.

Tenet 8: Make it a duty continually to improve the member's professional ability and to develop the competence of associates in the use of management techniques.

Tenet 9: Keep the community informed on local government affairs; encourage communication between the citizens and all local government officers; emphasize friendly and courteous service to the public; and seek to improve the quality and image of public service.

Tenet 10: Resist any encroachment on professional responsibilities, believing the member should be free to carry out official policies without interference, and handle each problem without discrimination on the basis of principle and justice.

Tenet 11: Handle all matters of personnel on the basis of merit so that fairness and impartiality govern a member's decisions, pertaining to appointments, pay adjustments, promotions, and discipline.

Tenet 12: Seek no favor; believe that personal aggrandizement or profit secured by confidential information or by misuse of public time is dishonest.

After reading the tenets, consider these questions: Which values outlined in the Code matter most to you? Do the tenets as written accurately reflect the profession's commitment to ethics? Is some principle or value understated? Is some principle or value missing? Lastly, how would we know?

Feel free to share your thoughts with ICMA by sending comments to me at mperego@icma.org.

Martha Perego
ICMA Ethics Director
Washington, D.C.
mperego@icma.org

Baby Boomers Meet XYZ

And what happens when they do

by William Morris, AICP

We all have heard about or taken classes on the differences in various generations and how they relate to workplace interactions. Each group—baby boomers, Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z—has unique characteristics that managers must understand in order to be able to work effectively with staff.

Most of the literature on this subject is specifically geared to help older people (baby boomers, that is) to be better able to understand their younger staff members. It is almost always a top-down view of interoffice interactions.

What happens, though, when you, a baby boomer, are much older than your boss, who is a member of Generation Y? How does this appear when you are looking up?

World views can collide!

The first clue that things will be different in the workplace is communication. For the baby boomer manager, staff meetings at the beginning of the week are a normal means to get a grip on what is happening in various departments.

The Old-Time Staff Meeting

Holding the proverbial coffee cup, the Baby Boomer manager starts by telling staff at the table about what of import you will be doing that week and then going around the table and asking for the rest of the necessary facts and issues that the directors will be dealing with. Most of the directors, also generally being older, will crack open their old and battered Day Runner calendar books and jot down with ink pens the notes, dates, and times.

Gen X directors though, will do things a little differently. They will pull out small laptops, Droids, or some sort of the latest i-things to use to input the same data and will often be carrying two cellphones, one—of course!—is for work and the other is a personal phone.

You look at phones as a necessity, and, as your boomer eyes get worse, you might actually yearn for the day you get one of those old-folks phones with buttons the size of quarters. The younger generations see cellphones as indispensable to life as water and air.

So later you change jobs, and your new boss is Gen X. The morning conversation with the new, younger boss begins with, "Hey boss, can we set up a meeting to go over some pending issues?" The reply is, "Sure, but let me get to my Outlook for a time and date, and I'll text you."

Yet, the staff meeting never happens, and you get a text asking for a list of those important issues.

You send a three-page assessment of a potentially explosive land use issue, assuming that this will surely elicit a response from the front office and require an immediate face-to-face meeting. Then an e-mail notice pops up with a response that reads: OMG TMI 4 TC 2 get Mayor :(CU @ 1 BTW LOL Baxter 2 b next PD chief. THKU C

After uttering "What the heck?" or maybe thinking it's a computer error message because Windows might have just crashed, you later get a translation from your four-year-old grandson and find out the message says: Oh my goodness, that's too much information for the town council to be able to assimilate in the short term. The mayor is really not happy about the issue. See you at 1:00 pm. Oh, by the way, really funny, but Baxter is being named as the next chief of police. Thank you.

C****** [manager's name].

Later you receive an e-mail that has the manager's questions in a light blue color after each issue. You then respond in royal blue by providing the answers to her light blue questions.

Later, you get a light blue response following your royal blue answers that says "Thanks." This e-mailing, your thinking is, is just exhausting! Can't the person just pick up the phone or come down the hall?

What's What

The e-mail is efficient, I must admit. Yet, doesn't the importance of the issue sometimes warrant more personal interaction instead of trying to analyze and discuss a major issue using abbreviations, emoticons, and texting?

Not so from many a young person's perspective because "face time" is so not productive. But the implications of organizational isolation can be disruptive to an organization.

The younger generation's dislike for personal, face-to-face meetings and unbridled love for all things digital may create or exacerbate the effect of "silo-ing." With the use of staff meetings decreasing, there is less opportunity for individual department directors to understand the larger world of their counterparts, which increases the silo effect and reduces the sense of being on the same team.

Communications are fundamental, especially to baby boomers. We boomers need the feedback and interaction to validate positions we are taking, and to be able to have each other's back.

Yet, we will also need to understand that the upcoming generations do not need or want that kind of interaction as much. So, older subordinates will need to get used to less interaction from younger management or will need to find agreeable ways of cornering the managers to make them listen, face-to-face, without having to duct tape them to their chairs.

William Morris, AICP
Director
Planning, Zoning, and Building Department
Taos, New Mexico
wmorris@taosgov.com

Lessons from the Past for Leaders of the Future

What a Civil War general can teach you about leadership

by Aden Hogan, Jr.

History is full of opportunities to learn from the experiences of others. Historic figures, in particular, can provide exceptional insights.

We all know that there is an incredible volume of theory on leadership. There are also myriad models of leadership principles and methodologies. In fact, there is so much information that it can be overwhelming to look at how an individual becomes a leader or improves one's leadership capacity and skills.

Seeking history's lessons can help. Even after 150 years, the Civil War provides lessons that are still relevant today and not just from such well-known names as Abraham Lincoln, Ulysses S. Grant, and Robert E. Lee.

In my opinion, Union Brigadier General George S. Greene's actions at Gettysburg in July 1863 illustrate eight excellent principles of good leadership.

Who Was Greene?

Greene—"Old Man Greene" his soldiers called him or sometimes "Pap Greene"—at age 62, was one of the oldest generals in the Union Army. But he was far from doddering or ineffectual. Greene was a hardy warhorse, a man who spent most of his time in the saddle, an officer who insisted on hard drilling and discipline in camp and hard fighting on the battlefield.

Harsh in his manner, Greene was not a man who won immediate affection from his troops. But those under his command soon learned to appreciate his ability.

He was a colorful figure, with a full head of silver hair, huge mustachios, a large grizzled spade beard, and an easy-going style of dress that made him look more like a kindly preacher or farmer than an Old Army regular. To the New Yorkers of his brigade, most of whom were under 21, the old man must have

seemed an ancient relic out of the Revolution or the War of 1812.

In fact, though he was a relative of Revolutionary War hero Nathaniel Greene, General Washington's second in command, he was the son of a ship owner who was financially ruined by the War of 1812, and he was a native of Warwick, Rhode Island.

Greene had planned to go to Brown University, but his father's plunge into poverty made this impossible. Instead, he went to New York where he could find work. There he was fortunate to receive an appointment to West Point and graduated second in his class in 1823.

Due to his excellent academics, he was retained at West Point until 1827 as a professor of mathematics and engineering. Ironically, one of the students he taught during this period was Cadet Robert E. Lee.

This article will travel in time to the morning of July 2, 1863, in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, and examine eight principles all leaders can learn from.

Greene's Leadership Principle #1: Be Prepared

The early morning of July 2, 1863, finds General Greene arriving at Culp's Hill (southwest of the town of Gettysburg). He's in command of the third brigade of the Union XII Corps, second division. His brigade has less than 1,400 men. He immediately realizes his position demands breastworks (above-ground trenches).

Disregarding the objections of his division commander, Greene orders construction to begin. Fortunately, the hillside has ample supplies for their work. The result is an imposing rampart of wood, stones, and earth that would give Confederate attackers few targets.

General Greene knows that the Culp's Hill position is critical as it commands the entire Cemetery Ridge battle line. If the Confederates can get artillery up there, they could destroy the Army of the Potomac!

Good leaders always make preparations for worst case scenarios. Regardless of the task or role set before you, it is your job as leader to be prepared. That means learning as much as possible about your department, your role in the organization, and the expectations of your superiors. Once you understand what you are expected to know, you can educate yourself about your organization.

That doesn't mean that you will learn every nuance in detail. It does mean that you will gain an overall working knowledge of everything that goes on in your department that will equip you to lead.

Preparation makes the difference in your ability to present yourself as a leader who cares and intends to lead the department toward greatness. As an informed leader, you will be prepared to make accurate and difficult decisions.

Prior preparation and planning makes the difference in your ability to present yourself as a leader who cares, who is competent and who intends to lead the organization toward success. As an informed leader you will be ready to make accurate and effective decisions.

Greene's Leadership Principle #2: First Things First

The Union left has almost broken late on the afternoon of July 2, 1863. Lieutenant General James Longstreet's Rebels have hit the Federals hard for more than an hour, with the 15th and 47th Alabama storming up Little Round Top; they were poised to capture the key high ground on the Union left flank. Major General George G. Meade, commanding the Army of the Potomac, responds to the threat on his left by calling up the XII Corps, which is guarding the Union right on Culp's Hill.

Upon receiving Meade's instructions, Major General Henry Slocum requests permission to leave one of his two divisions on Culp's Hill as a precaution. But Meade is adamant in his call for all available troops and allows Slocum to pick only one brigade to stay behind. The weight of Meade's questionable decision falls on the shoulders of Brigadier General George Greene and his brigade of New Yorkers.

As dusk set in, Greene orders his five New York regiments to stretch out in a line one-man deep, with one foot of space between the men. The fortified trenches are nearly half-a-mile long, and as Green inspects them, he wonders if he has enough manpower to hold his ground.

Now instead of a whole Corps to defend the hill, General Greene has only his understrength brigade of 1,400 New Yorkers. He knows his priority is to hold Culp's Hill and thus deny the high ground to the enemy. He moves forward with his plan and places his men along the breastworks for the attack he expects to come.

Each day will greet you with new challenges, obstacles, and changes. It is your job as the leader to prioritize the tasks facing your team. As the elements of the challenge change, you are the one who must maintain focus on the big picture. Tasks may need to be prioritized day-by-day, and sometimes even hour-by-hour. Over time, priorities change according to the needs and desires of the organization.

Good leaders put planning in the decision-making process to ensure that the key objectives are kept in focus and that resources are deployed to accomplish the "first things first." Keeping the overall goal in your sights allows you to get to the biggest problems first. An unmanaged crisis is a pending disaster. General Greene's No. 1 goal was to hold Culp's Hill.

Greene's Leadership Principle #3: Expect Problems

For General Greene, it was too late to do anything more than wonder. Being the type of leader he is, however, Greene has been focused on the problem since he arrived at Culp's Hill. At 7:15 p.m., Union skirmishers spotted Confederates crossing Rock Creek, near the foot of Culp's Hill. As the drab butternut-and-gray mass approaches, the skirmishers fire a few volleys then race up the rocky, wooded hill for the safety of the breastworks.

General Greene has anticipated the attacks; he expects it. His prior preparations throughout the day have put his team in a position of readiness that could mean the difference in the coming fight. Now it is here. The attack that General Meade didn't expect now occurs.

The unexpected will happen. Not only should you plan for the unexpected, but also train your staff to expect it too. Remember that "variables do, and constants may not always be." Checking our assumptions is always a good thing as the action plan unfolds.

This doesn't mean living on the edge of your seat, always anticipating the worst. It does mean being aware that things don't always work out the way we plan or would like them to. As managers know, things can happen, and it is critical that you, as the leader, be flexible enough to maneuver yourself and your team through the unexpected.

Greene's Leadership Principle #4: Be A Decision Maker

As dusk settles in, Confederate Major General Richard Ewell launches an entire division (nearly 5,000 men) at Greene's single understrength brigade. Three brigades of Maryland, North Carolina, Virginia, and Louisiana troops waded through Rock Creek and storm up the rise through the near darkness created by the canopy of leaves that block the fading sun.

General Greene certainly does not like his situation, but he doesn't hesitate to deploy his troops for the fight he knows is coming. His foresight has his men in the breastworks, and he deploys early-warning skirmishers before the enemy attack begins. This gives his brigade the initial advantage.

Good leaders are decision makers and solution creators. In a crisis situation, decisions will often need to be made on the spot. Good leaders will have already weighed their options before that decision time comes.

The outcome of your decision can often impact a variety of areas within the organization so don't forget to take this into consideration. Don't be paralyzed, however, by fear that you will make the wrong decision. In a crisis, take what time you have to make the most reasonable and well-thought-out decision you can.

But don't procrastinate. Inaction is an action. Procrastination kills morale and makes your team sluggish. It also can cause self-doubt and will certainly affect the outcome negatively.

Inaction is like a vacuum. If you don't make a decision someone else will. Do not allow your decisions to be usurped because of procrastination. A well-informed and prepared leader will be able to make decisions based on the best interest of the organization, even in the tight timeframes of a crisis.

Greene's Leadership Principle #5: Don't Avoid Problems

Even as his skirmishers frantically leap over the breastworks to get back under cover, General Greene dispatches a courier to XI Corps commander Major General Oliver Howard and to Brigadier General James Wadsworth of the I Corps with an urgent plea for reinforcements.

Random shots ring out as the Confederates approach the top of Culp's Hill. Federals crouch anxiously behind their bulwarks, listening to the ominous footfalls in the woods. Suddenly, the lead Confederate ranks appeared out of the shadows, and Greene's officers order the New Yorkers to open fire.

Out into the night, like chain-lightning, leaps the zigzag line of fire. Scores of Rebels drop as the New Yorkers' burst of flame and lead find its mark. Confederate officers pull their shocked troops back into the woods to regroup.

Greene and his brigade were as prepared as he could make them. Even as the attack was unfolding, he took the necessary steps to deal with the problem—the attack—and to safeguard his team by requesting reinforcements. General Greene was affecting the actions of the enemy by his planning, preparation, and management actions.

Successful leaders don't avoid problems, they provide solutions. Small problems that are not addressed promptly and decisively can turn into major obstacles. Evaluate problems as they arise. Some problems are technical, others organizational, and others interpersonal. Have key people in place to handle specific issues and hold them accountable for resolving issues.

Ignoring problems is another morale killer. Leaders who hide their head in the sand leave themselves and their team exposed to the unmanaged events that can create a disaster.

Greene's Leadership Principle #6: Maintain Focus On Your Purpose

For the Union troops, the respite is brief. Their attackers reorganize quickly and open fire from behind large rocks and trees. But it soon becomes clear that with the Federals heavily entrenched on high ground and shrouded in darkness and smoke, the Confederates cannot capture the hill with long-range fire. The order to charge comes again.

About 8:00 p.m., Confederates from Virginia and Maryland assaulted Greene's extreme right. Holding the position are the 456 men of the 137th New York. Even though they gain part of the vacant Union works, the attacking Virginians and Marylanders are unable to push through the thin, defiant line.

Meanwhile, the fighting rages on all along the line. On Greene's left, six regiments of Virginians tangled with the 60th and 102nd New York. In the center, five Louisiana regiments storm the works in front of the 78th and 149th New Yorkers. Greene's troops hold fast. The Confederates make four separate charges between 7:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m., with each attack meeting the same disastrous end.

Greene never has more than 1,350 troops in line to face 4,000 to 5,000 Confederates. He is able to maintain his bristling defense of the hill by using his limited resources wisely, rotating troops to and from the battle line to restock their cartridge boxes and clean their weapons. The Union troops cheer on their comrades as they race back and forth, pushing each

other to greater and greater heights of determination.

Once you have established goals and surrounded yourself with good people, work to keep your goals and priorities in focus. It's easy for you and your employees to forget the big picture as you deal with daily concerns. It is your job as the leader to keep the primary focus in front of yourself and your employees.

Every job, every person, and every strategy should be committed to reaching your primary goal. If this is to happen, you will have to remind others often of your team's focus and purpose. A lack of focus would have had fatal results for General Greene. Not only would he and most of his brigade likely have been killed in the mounting attack, they would have also lost their critical asset of the high ground of Culp's Hill and allowed the advantage to swing to the enemy.

In crisis or daily routines, a lack of focus allows errors, bad decisions, and poor actions to creep in, which can destroy progress toward the team's goals. Effective leaders stay focused on the mission!

Greene's Leadership Principle #7: A Big Part Of Leadership Is Being There

Throughout the raging battle, General Greene rides up and down the line, showing no regard for his personal welfare. He remains conspicuous, constantly moving through his lines while under fire to encourage his besieged troops. He is often seen stopping alongside his men, firing his pistol at the charging enemy, and offering support and motivation to his men.

About 10:00 p.m., the Confederate attacks cease. At the same time units of the XII Corps began to return to the hill. General Green's line has bent but has not broken. The right flank had been tested, and it has been saved by a small, gutsy force and a gallant leader, General George S. Greene.

Early on July 3, the Confederates try three more times to take Culp's Hill, but the attacks prove fruitless. Ewell withdraws late in the morning. Greene estimates Confederate losses at 2,400, while his brigade has lost only 307 killed or wounded.

To have the leader with you, especially in a crisis, makes a team stronger than it would be on its own. There is power in good leadership, but you have to be there to use it. General Greene's presence bolstered frightened and tired troops and because of his leadership they stayed with him. The fight that his men put up on the night of July 2, 1863, ranks as one of the best of any brigade during the entire Civil War.

Good leaders are visible. They share the hardships and the good times with their team. Our integrity as a leader is tested in crisis by standing in front of the team and setting the example of behavior and action. The battle cry of "follow me" tells us we must be in front where everyone can see us.

Greene's Leadership Principle #8: Keep Things Simple

General Greene's most important contribution at Gettysburg was his early-morning decision to construct breastworks, while officers on both sides still opposed their use. Not Greene. He believed human lives were too important to be sacrificed to bravado or unplanned battle tactic.

He had a practical, simple, yet elegant solution to a pending problem. The construction of the breastworks allowed his significantly small force to hold off a whole Confederate division for most of the night until he was reinforced. It also resulted in reduced casualties in his brigade.

If Culp's Hill had been lost, the day's battle would have been for nothing, and the Union would have likely lost the battle that unfolded the next day. But General Greene and his New Yorkers held the hill.

The burdens of leadership can sometimes have a negative, snowball effect. Decisive, clear leadership keeps this from happening. Simplify issues whenever possible. Keep small things small. Break actions into understandable and doable pieces. Don't allow little issues to be blown out of proportion. Keep the mission simple.

Delegating minor responsibilities and keeping competent personnel in place who can handle minor problems allows you to focus on the larger goals and initiatives. Provide clear, concise instructions. Leadership is complicated enough so you need to keep your job as simple as possible.

These principles are just as valuable for us today as they were 150 years ago. Successful leaders are prepared, honest, forward-looking, competent, focused, inspiring, and "in the present," as well as life-long learners. The principles gleaned from General Greene and his leadership example at Gettysburg can serve us well in tackling the issues we confront in local government today as well as in the future.

Aden Hogan, Jr., is city manager, Evans, Colorado (ahogan@ci.evans.co.us).

What's the Best Advice You've Ever Received?

Thomas Dowling
County Manager
Meath County Council, Ireland
tdowling@meathcoco.ie

After more than 40 years of local government service and working as a senior manager since 1987, I have had the opportunity to reflect many times on advice given over these years.

The best leadership advice I have been given is to bring people on your journey with you. The impact of people willingly sharing the same journey with the same end destination creates amazing results, which have enormous positivity and goodwill for all involved.

For example, if a local government body, state agency, and the population in the community share and understand the same vision for their community, then they can achieve anything they desire.

If, however, you force or impose your vision on a community or indeed the staff in the local government organization, there will be resentment and a poor outcome with significant reputational damage to the organization. It will be seen as uncaring and believed by the people that it also neither consults nor listens adequately.

Elizabeth Dragon
City Manager
Franklin, New Hampshire
citymgr@franklinnh.org

I am not sure where I learned this piece of advice, whether from a book, in a class, from a mentor, or just from my experiences along the way but the best advice was: Never ask someone to do something you wouldn't do yourself. For me, this means showing department heads and employees that you live by the same set of rules.

Lead by example! Setting high expectations for yourself will filter down to high expectations for the rest of the organization. Employees and other managers respect this and will follow a leader who is worthy of their respect.

I have also found that employees respect a leader who isn't afraid to get her hands dirty—literally. Pick up litter on the way to your office and be the example because sometimes actions speak louder than words.

Also, don't be shy about opportunities to get out of the office and connect with employees. Lead, but don't forget to take everyone else along with you. The best leaders set the example and show the way.

What's the best advice you've ever received?

John Patterson
City Manager
Casper, Wyoming
jpatterson@cityof-casperwy.com

I do think it is all about getting the right people on the bus. To that end, the best advice I was ever given was to "hire based upon personality, because you can train up the rest." Passion, determination, enthusiasm, and persistence—these qualities are what I look for in the hiring decision.

Generally, by the time we winnow down the resumes, the final few look the same. It is the candidates' personal style that puts the person on my bus.

Carol Gonzales
City Manager
Shawnee, Kansas
cgonzales@cityof-shawnee.org

I learned what I've come to realize is the most powerful strategy a manager can use from listening to my dad, who worked in executive management at our local utility company while I was growing up.

He taught me by example through comments and anecdotes about numerous interactions with employees. While he sometimes discussed work-related projects and how helpful "Ralph's" input had been, more often he told us about people's anniversaries and new babies being born, or he shared funny stories "his people" had told him about their lives.

His genuine interest and personal investment in them was obvious. It wasn't until I interned with the company during college that I fully recognized how important this was. Everyone who knew him expressed their loyalty and respect to me. They remembered how much he cared.

I like to think that I've woven that legacy of real leadership into my own style.

Learn from the Chicken Lady

Four traits that relate to the management profession

by Julie Ayers

At a joint meeting of the board of supervisors and planning and zoning commission this past spring, the subject of urban chickens was on the agenda. We are in a relatively rural part of Arizona, but even so, what happened next took everyone by surprise.

Sitting in the back of the room was a woman who had brought an exhibit to help her make her point at the meeting— a real, live, full-grown chicken. She had been hiding it under her jacket for the first hour of the meeting!

In recounting this story and describing how it relates to me—I explain later why I've used the chicken lady as a model—I have to note that, although I dislike stereotypes and resist being labeled, it is a fact that our profession of local government management comprises more men than women. And I would be lying if I said that being a female county administrator doesn't impact the way I conduct business and interact with others, because of course it does.

Individuality Counts

Each of us comes to this profession with our own experiences, quirks, and personality traits that impact the way we perform our jobs. I believe it would be fair to say that managers come in as many different varieties as local governments do!

With that being said, I think that women who want to work in this profession can learn from the chicken lady. After all, she was passionate about an issue, took a risk, made an impression, and executed her plan seamlessly.

Here's how I see these four traits being related to my service as a manager:

Passion. Local government management isn't just a job—it's a lifestyle. Past articles in this space have talked about the fishbowl that managers live in. This effect is amplified in small communities, and we are not able to shop at the grocery store or attend church without the job following us.

Because I'm a mom, my job accompanies me to my children's sporting events and parent-teacher conferences. Sometimes it is cool to have a mom whom their civics teacher talks about and sometimes extremely not cool when I fail to watch the game because I am talking about the latest budget issues with a concerned resident.

Risk. It is generally accepted that women are less risk tolerant than men. I do believe this plays some part in why fewer women are serving as managers. After all, what could be riskier than directly reporting to three elected officials and being responsible for supporting an additional 24 of them? This is my reality in Arizona county government.

Before accepting my current position, I was human resources director for Yavapai County and had some sense of security in that role. The largest question for me when I was deciding whether to accept the move to county administrator was whether I was willing to risk my family's well-being to do so. Although my predecessor held the position for a long time, the reality is that most of us will not leave our management positions voluntarily.

Impression. When I was appointed administrator, I followed in the footsteps of a six-foot, five-inch man who had held the position for 20-plus years. And here I was, a five-foot woman, so I am not an immediately imposing figure.

I also was age 36 when I accepted the position, and I'm told I look younger than I am. My job title, county administrator, also sometimes complicated matters. All too frequently I arrived at public meetings to the confusion of the organizer who was attempting to figure out whose administrative assistant I was.

The other side of the coin is that I believe not being physically intimidating can sometimes give me an edge when dealing with conflict and negotiations.

Execution. Of course having passion, taking the risk, and making a good impression don't matter if we can't execute. Just knowing the nuts and bolts of our management responsibilities is not enough to be successful. It is the relationships we forge with elected officials, constituents, and employees that make the difference between effectiveness and ineffectiveness.

And this is where I think the stereotypes give the edge to the women (finally!). Adapting

communication style to the audience, interpreting body language, and active listening are all valuable skills. Your credibility as a local government manager is your lifeline: mean what you say, follow through, and hold true to your values.

Use the Chicken Lady's Qualities

I don't for a minute believe that being a female local government manager is any more or less difficult than being a male local government manager. The challenges and advantages may be different, but all good managers are nothing if they are not flexible and adaptable.

I think all managers can use the chicken lady's qualities as we navigate our careers in local government, regardless of our gender.

Julie Ayers is the County Administrator for Yavapai County, Arizona. She can be reached at julie.ayers@ co.yavapai.az.us

Can't Afford to Hire New Talent This Year? Wrong!

You can't afford not to

by Bethany Rubin Henderson

Do you think that budget cuts, declining revenues, and the lingering recession mean you can—or should—put off developing your local government's future workforce? Think again. The statistics speak for themselves.

Local governments need more highly educated and highly skilled workers than the private sector does, but governments pay them less. Two-thirds of local government employees (compared with one-third of private sector workers) are knowledge workers and are valued for their ability to act and communicate with knowledge of a specific subject area, and nearly half have college degrees (compared with one-quarter in the private sector).[1] Yet, local governments compensate their workers about 4 percent less than the private sector. If you ignore retirement benefits and look just at the wage penalty, that figure jumps up to 9.5 to 12 percent less.[2]

The local government workforce is aging and on its way out the door; 63.5 percent of local government employees nationwide are older than 40.[3] On average, they are five to seven years older than their private sector counterparts.[4] The majority of senior-level staff (program managers, administrators, knowledge workers) either could retire today or will become retirement eligible soon.[5]

Apparently morale for senior-level staff is tanking under the strain of having to do so much more with so much less. Between May 2010 and May 2011, 25 percent of retirement-eligible state and local government employees moved up their retirement dates, a rate more than double the prior year.[6]

Local governments have minimal bench strength, at best. For decades, top young talent has shunned local government work. Since the 1980s, survey after survey has shown the vast majority of college students view government work as full of inflexible red tape, a dead end, inefficient, and bureaucratic. They see no opportunity in government to be part of innovative, creative, and challenging learning environments, to quickly assume leadership roles, or to collaborate as partners with equally bright peers and mentors—job characteristics that our youngest workers—millennials—prize particularly highly.

Recession-driven layoffs are now forcing out the few highly skilled young workers that communities have. Enrollment in MPA and MPP programs dropped last year for the first time in a decade,[7] and many graduates with MPA and MPP degrees now head for nonprofit jobs without giving government work so much as a passing thought.

Fellowship Programs

The good news is that today's top young talent is eager for meaningful, community-oriented work. Many 18- to 30-year-olds now report that doing good for society is as important to them as doing well financially.[8]

Not nearly as reflexively antigovernment as their predecessors (a trend documented by the Pew Research Center, the New America Foundation, and Harvard's Institute of Politics), 37 percent of Americans age 18 to 30 actually expressed affirmative interest in government jobs in a 2010 Gallup poll.[9]

Fellowship programs let local governments take advantage of these trends by offering a cost-effective way to try out new talent and get a valuable work product in the process, without the long-term expense of new hires or the need to increase the number of full-time employees (FTEs).

Because fellowships are time limited and perceived as elite by participants, they appeal to the best and brightest—the very people you want working for you and your residents deserve to have working for them. When Fellows are in your office full time, they can take on meaningful roles in long-term projects.

Need a surgical strike? ICMA's Local Government Management Fellows lets any ICMA member community bring on a recent master's graduate to apprentice full time for two years. Alumni often progress into local government manager roles.

Need a whole SWAT team? City Hall Fellows deploys a group of recent college graduates to a single city or to a regional cluster of communities for one year. Fellows serve as special project assistants to senior administrators. Simultaneously, they spend more than 300 hours studying the real politics of how that city or county works, through case studies, site visits, workshops, and hands-on, pro bono consulting projects for city agencies. Data show that more than half of alumni remain in local public service.

For a relatively low cost (less than a regular FTE and without any long-term commitment), fellowships offer both immediate, high-quality work product and a proven way to attract new talent.

Endnotes

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Bethany Rubin Henderson is the founder and executive director of City Hall Fellows. To learn more about this program and how to get Fellows deployed to your community, visit www.cityhallfellows.org. Rod Wood, ICMA-CM, is an ICMA Legacy Leader and current interim city manager, Indian Wells, California (rjwood@rjwoodassociates.com). To learn more about ICMA's Local Government Management Fellows program, visit icma.org/lgmf.

How I Spent My Summer Vacation. . .

You guessed it—at city hall—and yes, it was incredible!

by Corey Schmidt and G. Chris Artung

Across college campuses this fall, students might have been asked that age-old question, "How was your summer vacation?" The standard reply usually consists of the word "good" and perhaps not much else. But if that description is all the student can muster, then a summer internship in local government wasn't part of the agenda.

As a 2011 summer intern with the city of Maryland Heights, Missouri, I was fortunate to experience the dynamic nature of management in local government. Although the old adage that no two days are alike may not be entirely true for an intern, there are certainly enough everyday twists to keep things interesting. Particularly in this internship program, the combination of challenging tasks and managers who welcome thoughtful ideas made it a great fit not just for me but also for scores of others in past years.

A 26-Year Program

Maryland Heights has operated this internship program every summer since the city incorporated in 1985. The program originated in the administration department, with graduate student interns from local universities who were interested in municipal management.

Over the years, internships were developed for other city departments—community development, parks and recreation, public relations, and public works—and expanded to include undergraduate and graduate students from schools around the country. Maryland Heights has now hosted more than 100 interns in its 26-year existence.

This past summer, the internship program included students from universities in the Midwest who worked on a variety of projects. Interns in community development conducted research and analyzed data that related to city planning and zoning. A public works intern performed design, concept, and cost estimates for engineering and construction projects. Another intern, in parks and recreation, learned about the management of a recreational facility. In administration, three interns worked on economic development research, human resources matters, and budget projections.

Although we worked independently on these projects, we as a group also experienced various aspects of city government. Weekly excursions to facilities like a water treatment plant and a recycling center exposed us to operations taking place outside of city hall that still impact service delivery and quality of life in the area. We also planned the annual summer barbeque for the city's 200 employees, a task designed to give us experience working on an interdepartmental project. It was also a lot of fun!

Projects like these benefited past interns when they were seeking jobs after their internships concluded. More than half of them now enjoy employment in the public sector, and many others work for private firms that conduct business with government. Regardless of the sector in which they are employed, past interns have overwhelmingly reported that the internship gave them skills and experiences still useful years later.

In addition to providing a slew of students with a launching pad into public service, the internship program has also been beneficial to the city. The staff can

rely on summer interns to complete tasks and projects that are meaningful to the organization's success. They bring perspectives that can freshen up staid approaches to conducting the business of government. Perhaps most important, interns give department heads and managers an opportunity to convince the next generation that a career in public service is a worthwhile endeavor.

Benefits Are Real

The Maryland Heights internship program is just one of many around the country that has been offering hands-on experience to students pursuing a career in local government. As any student who has conducted an internship search will note, however, there is still a need to increase the availability of meaningful internship programs at the local level. Although budget constraints may make growth difficult, this is one program that does not need a sophisticated cost-benefit analysis to implement, and the benefits of employing interns far outweigh the costs!

When members of the 2011 class of Maryland Heights interns concluded their experience, some traveled back to school to finish degrees while others went off to begin their careers. Whatever paths we ultimately choose to pursue, we will be better prepared because of our experience as interns. And next time someone inquires about our summer vacation, we will have a lot more to say than "It was good."

Corey Schmidt was a 2011 Summer Intern in Maryland Heights, Missouri and is a Graduate Student at the School of Public and Environmental Affairs at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. He can be reached at corschmi@indiana.edu.

The Job Interview
The Importance of the Last(ing) Impression

A lot of advice has been given about the importance of the first impression in a job interview. Although I agree that candidates must be aware of the power of a poor first impression, at least with a poor first impression the candidate has the balance of the interview to recover.

If a candidate leaves a less than favorable impression as the interview is ending, there is no opportunity to overcome that.

Let's examine a few of the trouble spots that can ruin an otherwise positive interview.

1. Don't prolong the interview needlessly. A common mistake some candidates make is asking too many questions in the initial interview stage. This needlessly prolongs the interview. The hiring authority often allows time at the end of this type of formal interview for the candidate to make a final statement or ask questions of the interview panel.

This period is intended to allow the candidate to ask a limited number of questions. The schedule usually does not provide time for the candidate to ask the panel as many questions as the candidate has been asked. Candidates who open their notebooks and begin to ask a long series of detailed questions may well talk themselves out of an otherwise favorable rating.

2. Know the details of the interview process. It is important for candidates to be prepared for the interview by knowing the details of the interview process. One of the details candidates need to know is how much time the organization has allocated for the interview and then be sensitive to that schedule.

If the interviewer extends the allotted time with follow-up questions, that is the interviewer's choice. If the candidate, however, causes the schedule to slip by asking too many questions at the end, that can be seen as a definite negative by the panel.

3. Do the homework. Another red flag is the candidate who asks a question that indicates a lack of preparation. Before an interview, candidates should research the organization and the position by reviewing material available on the Internet or from such other sources as profiles developed by the organization or a search consultant. Questions that indicate the candidate has done due diligence are viewed positively by interviewers.

Candidates also need to be careful about asking questions that come across as being critical of the organization or its management. A brief job interview is probably not the time to get into a critical evaluation. If the position seeker is hired, there will be ample time to understand all of the challenges of the position.

4. Don't assume the interviewers know you want the job. I remember a chilling statement made by an interviewer after a candidate left the room at the conclusion of an interview. One panel member said to the others, "Do you think he really wanted this job?" It is imperative that a candidate never leave an interviewer with even a remote impression of being uninterested in the position—assuming, of course, that the job seeker truly wants the job.

One of the basic principles of sales training is: Always ask for the sale. Salespeople are taught to never assume anything. I think that is a good principle to follow if you are trying to sell yourself for a job. At the close of the interview, when an applicant is about the leave the room, the applicant should look directly at the interview panel and state or restate a desire for the position. A statement such as "I just want to make sure you know that I am truly interested in this position and believe that I can make a contribution to the organization" will eliminate any confusion.

5. Leave the room with a confident demeanor. Interview guides stress the importance of entering the interview room with a confident demeanor, sometimes described as "having presence." Leaving the room with a confident demeanor at the close of an interview is at least as important. Interviewers evaluate everything about a candidate during the interview. Not only the information being disseminated but also the candidate's body language and tone of voice.

At this stage, the interviewers are envisioning how the candidate would perform as a representative of the organization both internally and externally. As a candidate for city manager, assistant city manager, or other senior position, the applicant will be judged on presence as well as other personal characteristics.

Concluding the interview with presence includes expressing a strong interest in the position, shaking hands with the panel members, and thanking them individually for their time. It is important to maintain eye contact during these brief encounters because eye contact is an indicator of confidence, sincerity, and transparency.

6. Finally, use the name of the interviewer as you shake hands. One of the most effective interviews I ever saw involved a candidate who was being interviewed by three city managers for a position as director of a multicity operation. She had obviously done her homework and had the three names attached to the correct faces.

Managing your interview by paying attention to small details may well make the difference between landing the job or being faced with disappointment and regret later.

G. Chris Hartung is the President of Chris Hartung Consulting and the Former City Manager of Denton, Texas

Management Minute

Investing in the Next Generation of Local Government Professionals

by Carl Stenberg

The Local Government Management Fellows (LGMF) Program was begun in response to demographic projections indicating retirements of substantial numbers of local government executives, as well as concerns about recruiting and retaining the next generation of local government professionals. Although the anticipated pace of retirements has been slowed by the most recent recession, an improving economy will undoubtedly create a substantial number of vacancies in managers' offices.

These demographic changes are occurring at the same time as global political, economic, and social trends are calling attention to the critical roles and responsibilities of local government.

ICMA, in partnership with the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, and the International Hispanic Network, established the LGMF Program with participating local governments. The purposes of this program are to generate interest in local government careers among recent master's program graduates and to create a clear path between these young professionals and council-manager communities across the country.

Through the highly-competitive program the most promising recent public administration, public policy, or public affairs master's degree graduates are provided with an attractive opportunity to learn about and enter the local government management field. Fellows are placed in full-time town, city, or county management positions, mentored by senior managers, and given real-world assignments. At the same time, local hosts benefit from having the services of a talented, well-trained young professional for one or two years at a reasonable cost.

The first LGMF class was recruited in 2004, and more than 90 graduate-level students applied. Since then a total of 82 new Fellows have been placed in one-year positions, and an additional 23 have served for two years. Candidate applications are evaluated by a six-member LGMF Program Advisory Board.

Some of the local government LGMF sponsors are:

- Catawba County, North Carolina
- Dakota County, Minnesota
- Decatur, Georgia
- Dubuque, Iowa (shared with Lancaster, Wisconsin)

A Value-Added Program

I can't say enough about the fellowship program. The local government management profession is a bit intimidating to enter, and the fellowship didn't just get my foot in the door, it opened the door. The managers who promote and support Fellows are typically incredible mentors. At least that has been my experience. The Fellows are the top of their class, and the combination of the two is the making of excellent results.

During the first year of my fellowship, with no prior experience, I steered committees and facilitated plans, managed several contracts, completely overhauled the village website, implemented a GIS program, and secured $600,000 in grants. By the end of the fellowship, I was serving as an interim director of public works.

Two years later, I am now a city administrator. This program not only helps identify future management issues; it also helps develop future managers.

— Nathan Thiel, city administrator, Mauston, Wisconsin (nthiel@mauston.com)

- Evanston, Illinois
- Loveland, Ohio
- San Jose, California
- Sarasota County, Florida
- Savannah, Georgia
- Tacoma, Washington
- University Place, Washington
- Winchester, Virginia

A full list of program hosts is online at icma.org/lgmf. In 2011, ICMA expects to place close to 10 new Fellows.

Filling the Pipeline

LGMF alumni are already filling the pipeline between graduate programs and local professional management positions. Among the alumni Fellows who are now city or town managers or assistants are:

- David Dillner, 2005–2006 Fellow in Winchester, Virginia, is city manager of Abilene, Kansas.
- Shea Scharding, 2007–2008 Fellow in Nether Providence, Pennsylvania, is township manager of Cumru, Pennsylvania.
- Scott Pingel, 2007–2009 Fellow in Federal Way, Washington, is city manager of Stanfield, Oregon.

- Jon Radermacher, 2008–2009 Fellow in Sarasota County, Florida, is city manager of Madison, Minnesota.
- Tanisha Briley, 2006–2007 Fellow in Davenport, Iowa, is assistant city manager of Davenport, Iowa.
- Nathan Thiel, 2007 Fellow in Riverside, Illinois, is city administrator of Mauston, Wisconsin.

Investing in the Future

Despite tough economic times, local governments need to make investments to keep the path between the current and the next generation of local managers full of able young professionals. Sponsoring a Fellow or sharing a Fellow with a neighboring community are excellent ways to help ensure that the future of local government and of the local government management profession will remain bright.

To apply to host a Fellow, contact Rob Carty at rcarty@icma.org or by phone at 202/962-3560. Visit icma.org/lgmf for additional details.

Carl Stenberg is a Professor of Public Administration and Government and Director, Master of Public Administration Program, School of Government, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, North Carolina (stenberg@sog.unc.edu). He is chair of the LGMF advisory board.

You Must Be This Tall to Ride

by Ken Decker

Some time ago, a colleague of mine applied for a position in a city significantly larger than the town he was managing at the time. Because he is an ICMA credentialed manager with a master of public administration degree and more than a decade and a half of successful experience as a city manager, I thought he was well qualified. He was a finalist but ultimately was not offered the job.

During a local managers' breakfast, I asked him if he knew why he was not chosen as the top candidate. Through back channels, he learned that he was considered a great applicant but that the governing body "just felt more comfortable" going with someone from a larger jurisdiction.

What's unusual about this story is that my colleague made it into the interview process. Many times administrators from smaller organizations are screened out of potential opportunities by requirements related to the size of the local government or the number of employees. It is the public administration version of the age-old American bias—bigger is better.

Size Matters

From one perspective, the bias toward "big" makes some sense. Freshly minted MPAs often look toward smaller jurisdictions to break into the field. It is not uncommon for a first-time assistant or manager to spend three to five years in a position before looking for the next career opportunity.

Larger jurisdictions generally offer better pay and more lavish benefits. Over the course of a professional career, moving up often means moving around.

There is a reasonable assumption that the best indicator of an ability to do a job is success in a similar position. Ceteris paribus, if a manager has successfully run a city government serving 50,000 residents, that manager would seem well prepared to manage the business of similarly sized community.

When translated into the hiring process, this becomes the general idea— that the manager of the aforementioned city is likely better qualified for a job in a larger jurisdiction than one who has worked in a smaller place.

Hiring is usually a competitive process (although some might argue the competition is more with human resources departments and less between the candidates). If bigger jobs are indeed better jobs, then it seems reasonable to assume that the professionals managing larger communities have competed successfully in the employment marketplace to attain these positions.

This rather Darwinian view relies on such assumptions as the hiring process being fair and open to all potential applicants, including those from smaller places. Other presumptions are often at work: that selection processes are generally an objective and reliable way of evaluating talent, and that successful candidates are consistently chosen on merit.

Put simply, the expected outcome is that the best managers are running the biggest organizations. Following that logic then, the best public administrators on the planet are those running the largest branches of the U.S. federal government, an idea with which some city and county administrators might respectfully disagree.

Other End of the Telescope

In reality, the hiring process for public administrators is far from perfect. Just as good managers are occasionally fired because of local politics, less-qualified candidates can also be hired for reasons unrelated to professional qualifications.

Looking at the narrow metrics of size—population, budget, or employees—ignores how differently jurisdictions operate. A city that aggressively uses private contractors to provide services may have a fraction of the employees of a similarly sized municipality. On one hand, there is some merit to the idea that bigger

HandsOn Network, the volunteer-activation arm of Points of Light Institute, includes 250 community action centers that deliver 30 million hours of volunteer service each year and extend to 16 countries around the world. These centers focus on helping people plug into volunteer opportunities in their local communities; partnering with more than 70,000 corporate, faith, and nonprofit organizations to manage volunteer resources; and developing the leadership capacity of volunteers. Annually, the network delivers approximately 30 million hours of volunteer service valued at $626 million. For more information, visit www.handsonnetwork.org.

My Good Deed, Inc., was founded to promote a nonpartisan and productive way for Americans and others to remember the victims, survivors, volunteers, and heroes of the September 11, 2001, attack on America. Each year, it encourages all Americans and others to voluntarily support charitable causes, perform good deeds, and engage in service activities in observance of the anniversary of the 9/11 attacks. For more information, visit www.mygooddeed.org.

organizations are more complex. On the other hand, small jurisdictions face many of the same challenges and do much of the same work as their larger cousins, just on a smaller scale. The greatest step in complexity is picking up the first unit of trash, not the 10,000th.

Larger organizations also have vastly more resources. In a big city or county the chief administrator often can rely on a wide range of directors, deputy directors, and the like. In smaller jurisdictions, the city or county manager often does not have that luxury. In conversations with other small-city managers, I have jokingly referred to my fictional drawer of sock puppets with names like "Planning Director" or "Chief of Code Enforcement."

A Darwinian view of managerial qualifications presumes that most managers aspire to more prestigious jobs running larger organizations. This is not necessarily a valid assumption as some seasoned (and highly competent) administrators stay in smaller jurisdictions as a deliberate choice.

Relocation can be disruptive for families, particularly with school-age children. While larger jurisdictions may offer better pay and benefits, the difference is often modest. In this area, compensation packages for long-tenured small-city managers are competitive with those for county directors with vastly larger staffs and budgets.

Political stability also plays a role in cost-benefit analysis. Put simply, some openings represent high-risk positions in historically unstable jurisdictions, what one could call the city-county administration version of "elephant graveyards." In some situations, staying put can be a savvy career move.

Working in a smaller jurisdiction often has benefits related to size. A manager can develop close professional working relationships with the entire staff rather than just department heads or bureau chiefs. Fewer layers of organization exist between the chief administrator and residents. Project management tends to be more hands-on. Smaller organizations can be more nimble, responsive, and experimental.

Rethinking the Limits

The pool of small-city and small-county managers contains some extraordinarily talented people. The challenge is how to get governing bodies and HR departments to look beyond the simplistic focus on organizational size. Here are a few metrics that might allow candidates from smaller jurisdictions a chance to compete:

Years as a city or county manager. The position of serving as a chief administrative officer in any size organization is substantively different than working as a department head or director. Success in the broad role of city or county manager in a small place compares favorably with success in a narrow field within a larger organization.

Longest tenure in a single organization. The first five years as an administrator are significantly different from the second or third five-year periods. The longer the tenure, the more evident performance becomes. Given the length of time required for many government projects, the first few years can be a relatively easy run.

After a decade or two, however, decisions—like chickens—often come home to roost. Staying in a given position can also indicate the achievement of balance in the sometimes competing priorities of community and career.

Number of election cycles and new officials. At some point, the people who hire a manager move on—willingly or not. Managing changes in the governing body requires the chief administrator to build relationships with new officials, occasionally people who were elected because they hate the old regime.

In fairness, sometimes whether or not one survives these political shifts is beyond the control of the city or county manager. Negotiating these changes successfully is often a positive indicator of a manager's diplomatic and relationship-building skills.

Professional development. The area of professional development is a level playing field. Managers from small local governments have the same opportunity to earn distinctions, like becoming an ICMA credentialed manager, as their peers in larger organizations.

One modest suggestion is to ask every jurisdiction advertising an opening through ICMA to accept and consider the application of any credentialed manager for an open position. This is a win-win proposition that would encourage participation in the valuable credentialing program and give critical exposure to top-performing administrators from smaller jurisdictions.

Ken Decker, ICMA-CM, is Town Manager of Hampstead, Maryland. He can be reached at hampstead@carr.org.

What Will Help Next Generation Leaders Advance?

by Patricia Martel, Shawnna Maltbie, and Joanne Bond

During the next three to five years, Daly City, California, will experience significant changes in its workforce that will result in high turnover in critical leadership positions. Known stats look like this: 35 percent of non-public safety employees will be 55 or older and eligible to retire; 27 percent of public safety employees will be age 50 or over; and 9.5 percent of public safety employees will be age 55 or over and eligible to retire.

Looking at these numbers, city staff members are aware of the immediate need to develop and prepare employees for future opportunities with higher-level and broader responsibilities. There is also a desire to ensure leadership continuity and to involve executive management in planning for the future.

Because the community is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of Daly City's service delivery, a strong leadership base, and long-term employee development, a three-phase succession plan was implemented in July 2006. The third phase of this plan is the internal management talent exchange program (I-MTEP), which began in June 2010. The main objectives of I-MTEP are to cross train, develop leadership competencies, build collaborative and interdepartmental relationships, and encourage sharing of talented employees across departments.

Program Purpose and Expectations

The city manager worked with human resources to implement an exchange program modeled after the management talent exchange program (MTEP), which was developed as an activity of the Preparing the Next Generation Program and used in San Mateo County, California. The primary difference is that MTEP is a city-to-city exchange, while the I-MTEP involves Daly City employees exclusively.

Participating employees were given an opportunity to develop new skills by working on a project while serving in a staff capacity in another department for a three-month period. Projects are submitted by department heads to the city manager and the director of human resources (HR) for consideration and selection.

Expectations for the I-MTEP participants include:

- Developing leadership competencies.
- Applying cross-training and transfer skills.
- Building collaborative, interdepartmental relationships within the city.
- Completing a department specific assignment.
- Presenting assignment outcomes at regular department head and city council meetings.

Application and Selection Process

Employees interested in applying for the I-MTEP are required to attend an informational session hosted by the city manager and the HR director. They also submit an application with responses to these questions:

1. Why are you interested in this program? (Please list one short-term and one long-term career goal and your plan to accomplish them.)
2. What is your greatest strength?

3. Which of your professional accomplishments are you most proud of?

4. What kind of transferable skills can you bring to the Daly City Management Talent Exchange Program?

5. If placed in a management talent exchange assignment, what skills would you want to develop?

6. How would you describe your ideal three-month assignment?

Applicants are interviewed by the city manager and the HR director. Candidates who most closely meet the competencies associated with the targeted positions and projects are selected to participate in the program.

Program Process and Curriculum

Prior to the start of the program, department heads meet as a group with an external leadership coach to strategize and plan for the program's success. At the kick-off meeting held one week before the program starts, department heads, participants, and the leadership coach meet to begin relationship building, exchange program expectations, and discuss assignments.

Participants create a development plan with input from the leadership coach and department heads that focuses on his or her specific growth areas, which may include leadership vision and style, public speaking, project management, emotional intelligence, interpersonal relationships, analytic and problem solving skills, stress tolerance, and other relevant needs.

The department heads are responsible for coaching and mentoring employees assigned to their department. They provide guidance with project assignments and also engage in meaningful, interactive experiences by taking participants to meetings with internal and external stakeholders, as well as on operational ride-alongs. The intent is to expose participants to roles and responsibilities of higher-level leadership and management.

Department heads and the leadership coach also check in with participants on program issues on a monthly basis. The intent of the check-in is to:

- Support specific leadership development needs.
- Reinforce coaching and mentoring responsibilities.
- Build relationships.
- Provide group coaching and teaching on common themes.
- Exchange ideas and share information.
- Manage assignment progress.

Individual leadership coaching is provided to the participants as well as the department heads through-

out the program. The city manager holds individual meetings with each of the participants to discuss program progress and their goals and vision for their future with the city.

Program Completion

In the final week, participants present a 10-minute, five-slide overview of their project assignments and leadership development to the department heads as well as to city councilmembers

At the end of the program, the manager, department heads, participants, leadership coach, and other interested parties celebrate (over lunch) successful program completion and individual and group accomplishments. They also conduct a program evaluation.

Program Outcomes

Based on feedback from the stakeholders, the program is a huge success. It accomplishes much more than what it set out to do. The impact on employees and departments has been significant. Participants return to their departments with new ideas, new enthusiasm, and new competencies.

I-MTEP offers a wealth of personal and professional development opportunities. It also provides an excellent vehicle for collaboration and problem solving for employees and department heads. Participants can step outside their comfort zone and are tasked with researching, developing, and presenting solutions to the city's current operational challenges.

Employees exit the program with a greater understanding of their individual strengths and weaknesses and with sharpened analytical, management, and interpersonal skills.

Program Impact

The impact of I-MTEP on Daly City has been to:

- Identify and energize the next generation of leaders.
- Strengthen cross-functional learning for workforce development.
- Clarify the department head role as mentor, which may also contribute to their personal goal of legacy building.
- Increase productivity through assignments that support city-wide initiatives including performance measures.
- Actualize succession planning goals within budgetary constraints through creative program development.

Patricia Martel is city manager, Daly City, California (pmartel@dalycity.org); Shawnna Maltbie is director of human resources, Daly City (smaltbie@dalycity.org); and Joanne Bond is a leadership coach, Montara, California (joanne@joannebondcoaching.com).

Hiring 2.0: 23 Creative Ways to Recruit and Keep Great Staff

by Jan Perkins

Hiring and keeping talented employees is requiring more creativity. It's especially true in these times of budget cutbacks and reduced staffing. With our organizations challenged to get the work done with fewer staff, we need to make sure we have talented people to do the job.

There is no single answer to how to attract and retain local government employees. Even as local government agencies cut back, retirements are increasing, and the need remains to recruit people who can do even more than may have been expected in the past. This means it's critical to use approaches that will enable you to keep and attract bright, hardworking, competent staff.

The wide range of approaches described here can be added to your toolkit to help your organization get the talent you need and keep the talent you have. Many of these practices can be implemented inexpensively.

23 Ways

Many traditional ways of hiring staff are not working, and organizations are changing their practices so that:

- People feel sought after.
- Candidates easily understand the jobs being advertised, how to apply, the qualifications and skills needed for the job, and the timeline for the process.
- People interested in a job get quick responses to their questions and applications.
- Departments can hire the best person for the job.

Forecast your talent needs on the basis of turnover trends and expected vacancies. Analyze changes in tenure, age at resignation and retirement, and other trends.

The approaches listed here are being used in local governments. To learn about other tools and to find resource people who can provide more information about these approaches, visit the website at icma.org/hiring2.0.

1. **Website Marketing.** Today's job seekers look on Facebook, Monster.com, jobs.icma.org, CALOPPS.org, and even YouTube. Web-based technology can streamline your practices to cut recruitment time by 50 to 70 percent.

2. **Simplified Position Descriptions.** Communicate an exciting and positive message early in the description, avoid jargon and exclusive language, and fully explain all benefits (for example, what exactly a 9/80 is) and how they relate to organizational values (for example, work-life balance).

3. **Branding.** Use consistent messaging to describe what the organization does and why. Public service, if communicated clearly as contributing to the broader community, will resonate with younger candidates.

4. **Map Your Hiring Process.** To streamline your hiring process, create a map of the process—from initial request to fill a vacancy to the start date of the new employee filling that job. Identify all of the steps, figure out how long it actually takes at each step, look for bottlenecks, and find ways to cut out steps and time.

5. Create a Hiring Plan. Create a plan for each step in the process of filling a vacancy—from recruitment and outreach, to candidate assessment, to keeping in touch with candidates, to background checks, final offer, and first day on the job. Use the hiring plan as a way to move the process along quickly and keep the candidates in the forefront.

6. Employee Referral Program. Give recognition or a bonus to staff for referring a candidate who is ultimately hired into a designated hard-to-fill position.

7. Electronic Requisitions and Applications. Speed the approval process by allowing required position requisition signatures to be done electronically, using online applications, and distributing eligibility lists via the Internet.

8. Career Pathways. Provide examples on your Human Resources Department website of possible career pathways in local government.

9. Cal-ICMA Coaching Program. Engage your staff in the coaching program. Make opportunities available to them to participate in mentoring, webcasting, and other programs offered through Cal-ICMA.

10. Strategic Workforce Planning. Forecast your talent needs on the basis of turnover trends and expected vacancies. Analyze changes in tenure, age at resignation and retirement, and other trends. Color code your organization charts to show staff ages to illustrate expected workforce turnover and opportunities for promotion for younger staff.

11. Talent Readiness Assessment. Use assessment tools for employees who are interested in moving up in the organization to help determine their readiness for leadership positions.

12. Refine the Role of Senior Managers. Require senior managers to be responsible for fostering the professional development of their staff members. Evaluate and reward your senior managers for their success in enhancing the skills and capabilities of their staffs.

Further Reading

- "What Millennial Workers Want: How to Attract and Retain Gen Y Employees," www.hotjobsresources.com/pdfs/MillennialWorkers.pdf.

- *Generation Y: Thriving (and Surviving) with Generation Y at Work*, by Peter Sheahan, Hardie Grant Books, 2006.

- *Talent on Demand: Managing Talent in an Age of Uncertainty*, by Peter Cappelli, Harvard Business Press, 2008.

13. Conduct "Stay" Interviews. Interview members of your staff, just as you would interview potential new employees, to ask about their goals and aspirations. Determine how the organization can help them stay interested and motivated to prevent them from moving on to other organizations.

14. Management Assistant or Fellowship Program. Hire recent master's degree graduates from a public administration, public policy, or urban studies program. Place them into a rotation-based program in the organization, give them challenging and inspiring work, provide mentors, and assist them in finding permanent jobs at the end of the program. If you are not able to hire someone full time, consider sharing the position and expense with a neighboring community.

15. Management Talent Exchange. Partner with another local government to exchange professionals for a three-month period to expose staff to new ways of doing things.

16. Mentoring and Early Career Experiences. Pair an employee with a senior manager as a mentor to provide career advice. Enable younger staff to attend conferences and regional events, make presentations to the governing body, job shadow, take on larger projects, and have other experiential learning opportunities. These "stretch" assignments provide staff members a sense that they are making contributions early in their careers.

17. Action Learning Teams. Engage emerging leaders in your organization in cross-departmental teams to address important problems. This enables emerging leaders to learn new skills and discover hidden talents.

18. Transfer of Institutional Knowledge. Create ways to document and impart knowledge of retiring employees to others. This can include creating an internal local government wiki.

19. Life-Work Balance. Provide a variety of flex scheduling options (for example, 9/80, 4/10), depending on the needs of employees and their work groups. Allow telework opportunities and provide appropriate technical support. Offer resources (such as info-referral) and encourage self-help support groups to employees who are concerned about child care, elder care, grief support, and other family support needs.

20. Employee Orientation or "Onboarding." Use the new-employee orientation to immediately describe the values and expectations of the organization as well as professional development and promotional opportunities.

21. **Preventive Health Care Programs.** Individuals respond positively to organizations that embrace the total health and well-being of employees. Create preventive care programs to not only reduce cost but also result in more healthy and productive employees.

22. **Ethics Standards.** Communicate the organization's ethical culture and expectations for all members. Emphasize the expected values and behaviors for employees, in doing the right things, along with the positive and negative consequences of walking the talk of the standards.

23. **Environmental Responsibility.** Show a commitment to the environment and sustainability by creating programs to address these issues.

End Note

Even though public agencies are struggling to fund services and are cutting back on staff because of fiscal constraints, the need for talented employees will remain. Competition for the best people will be tough—particularly with the continuing pace of retirements. Re-recruiting the best employees you have now as well as finding ways to attract top talent from the outside will be essential to successful service delivery.

Jan Perkins, ICMA-CM, former city manager of Fremont and Morgan Hill, California, is a consultant with Management Partners, Irvine, California (jperkins@ managementpartners.com). She is an ICMA Senior Advisor.

Network Like It's Your Job

by Maribeth Kuzmeski

For many job seekers, finding a job in today's job market can be like conquering a new frontier. With the unemployment rate still more than 9 percent, the job market has been flooded with job seekers—many of whom are experiencing a culture shock when they send out their résumés. After all, the days of mailing in your résumé and receiving a phone call to set up an interview are over.

Today, everything is done online, from sending in your résumé to setting up your first interview—and nine times out of 10, you're lucky to receive any kind of response, even an automatic one thanking you for your submission.

It doesn't take long to discover that in a virtual world it can be extremely difficult to get noticed by the decisionmakers whom you need to impress in order to land the job. I've found there are three easy steps to getting noticed in today's digitally dominated job market: networking, networking, networking.

Today you need more than a résumé and a cover letter to get that dream job. Think of yourself as CEO of Me, Myself, and I, Inc. You need to be doing everything you can to get the word out about your brand. That means networking.

Great networkers are capable of leaving something behind after every personal encounter—a thought, a memory, or a connection. This is exactly what you need to do if you are in the job market. You need to make strong connections, become a relationship builder. You want to be the first person who comes to mind when someone in your network hears about a great job opening.

Here is what you can do to network your way to a great new job.

Rejuvenate your résumé. Résumés rarely showcase how great you are. That's why it's probably time to breathe a little life into yours. Think of it this way: If you are the CEO of Me, Myself, and I, Inc., you will need some marketing materials to promote your brand. Your résumé and cover letter will serve as those marketing materials. Grab the attention of employers by upping the impact of your résumé. This might mean bucking the traditional format to include eye-catching—but informative—headlines or a list of social media links and sites.

Also make sure you are emphasizing the tangible benefits you've brought to past employers, including in management jobs, whether it's cutting costs or improving efficiency. Turn your résumé into something an employer would want to read.

Build your online résumé using LinkedIn. According to Jobvite.com's 2010 Social Recruiting survey, 83 percent of employers plan to use social networks to recruit this year. If you aren't already on business-focused social media sites like LinkedIn, take the time to set up a profile.

LinkedIn is especially important because it is the most commonly viewed source for job seekers and employers. Setting up a profile is fairly simple: go to www.linkedin.com, add your picture and a summary of your past job responsibilities, and state what you're looking for. As a LinkedIn member, you can also join groups, review books, and proactively connect with potential employers. Think of it as creating your own

> Busting through job search barriers can be a huge challenge in today's faceless, virtual world. The best way to overcome the challenge is to bypass the whole résumé e-mailing, no-response hoopla by making great connections with the people who can put you and your résumé right in front of the hiring decisionmakers at your dream job.

living résumé and a great way for people to connect with you!

Get face-to-face with potential employers! Find a way to get in front of your potential employers. These days it is much harder to show potential employers what you are all about and to forge a connection with them because so much of the pre-hiring process is done online and through e-mail. That is why it is essential that you find a way to communicate with them face-to-face.

Once you are face-to-face, in an interview or otherwise, focus on maintaining eye contact throughout. Lean in, show you are interested, and think before you answer any question. Thoughtful deliberation can be difficult if you're nervous, but it is critical in answering your potential employer's questions to the best of your ability. Establishing this face time is sure to set you apart from your job market competition.

Another great face-to-face opportunity comes after the interview. To show you paid close attention to everything your interviewer or interviewers said, stop at the local government's main office or human resources office with an article that you think would be of interest to that community's managers or staff.

Make an impact by using video. If you really want to capture the attention of a potential employer, record a quick video. Use it to get an interview or as a follow-up after an interview. Here's how it works: Instead of just e-mailing a résumé or a post-interview thank-you note, include a link to a video of you. Carefully script your response and record the quick message using a Flip video camera or even a webcam. Post it on YouTube or some other service and send a link to the video to your potential employer.

Here are some helpful scripting tips for getting the interview:

1. The video should be no longer than one or two minutes.

2. Introduce yourself.

3. Identify the job you would like to be interviewed for.

4. Tell the intended viewer three things about your background that may create an interest in interviewing you.

5. Thank the individual for watching the video and request an interview!

Become a contrarian networker. The focus of networking should not be on gaining an immediate job offer from your networking contacts. In fact, that tactic almost never works. The goal should, instead, be to build a mutually beneficial relationship with someone who may never even be able to give you a job but might know someone who can.

It's what I call contrarian networking. Before you go to your next networking opportunity, create a game plan. First, think about which contacts are the most important to you. Remember, these will not necessarily be the people you think might be able to give you a job on the spot. Brainstorm before the event to decide who the best connectors are. Who knows the people you want to know? By connecting with other great connectors, you are able to widen your reach. You expand your opportunities.

Let them do the talking. (You ask the questions!) There's nothing worse than coming away from a great networking opportunity realizing that you didn't capitalize on the situation. Come up with a list of questions to get the conversation going. Here are a few great ice breakers:

- What did you do for your vacation this year?

- Where did you grow up? Do you still have family there?

- How are your kids? What are they up to?

- What do you think about…? (Complete this question with something from current events, your community's local news, or a recent event in your profession. Remember, it is always a good idea to avoid topics such as religion and politics that can lead to contentious conversations.)

When the conversation is flowing freely, you can move on to more in-depth professional questions:

- What's the best thing that has happened to your community this year?

- What's one thing you've done that has really changed your career?

- What will you never do again in your profession?

- What's your biggest challenge?

- What do you find is the most effective way to keep elected officials happy?

It's always a good idea to follow up with a secondary question that encourages the individual to tell you more. The more the person talks and you listen, the more that person will like you because you are showing genuine interest.

Be prepared to pitch yourself in 15 seconds. You undoubtedly have a lot of qualifications and experience. So much that you could probably go on for hours about yourself. But the hard reality is that no one (except your mom!) wants to hear that much about your accomplishments.

So prepare a short, 15-second elevator pitch that hits on your career high points and top skills. Think

about what's unique about what you have done and what will help you stand out from a crowd of other job seekers.

The key to an effective pitch is keeping it short while still including your biggest wins. Be creative and think about how you can frame your accomplishments in a way that gets people's attention.

Network with the people you know. Sometimes the most obvious connections are the ones most easily ignored. When you are building your network or considering who might be able to lend you a helping hand during your job search, don't forget about people close to you who might have huge networks of their own.

Maybe, for example, your mom is or used to be a teacher. She's had contact with tons of parents over the years who just might be working in a local government. Or maybe your best friend is in a completely different field but has a huge network of friends on Facebook. You never know how a great opportunity will present itself. Don't count anyone out of your networking efforts, especially those who are the closest to you and likely to be the most willing to help.

Get involved in organizations that are connected to your profession. Job fairs can be great ways to get in front of potential employers, but you might not want to focus only on organizations you know are hiring. To meet people within your profession who might have the potential to hire you, attend seminars and join organizations or associations connected to your profession.

These events and organizations provide great opportunities to help you get your name recognized in your profession. Again, you might not find someone who is going to hire you on the spot, but you will have the chance to meet people who have the potential to hire you in the future. Take hard copies of your résumé and your business cards to any of these events. The more people who know you the better.

Volunteer. Volunteering is a great way to give back, but it is also a great way to sneak in some networking. There are usually many staff and volunteers who keep a nonprofit running, and volunteering provides you the opportunity to meet them. And remember, you don't necessarily have to be doing anything that is connected to your profession. Simply volunteering at a place with a cause you are passionate about will provide you the chance to meet a lot of great connectors whom you might not have met otherwise.

Be a mover and a shaker. The next time you attend a networking event or a party, force yourself to get outside your comfort zone. Don't just hang out with the people you already know. Introduce yourself to new people and find out as much as you can about them. The more you move around from group to group, the more connections you will be able to make. It's all about expanding your opportunities.

Always be networking. You don't have to be at an event or party or working your social networks to build your connections. We all run into people everywhere in our day-to-day lives, but few of us capitalize on all those great connections. Next time you're on an airplane, for example, instead of working on your laptop or reading the newspaper the whole time, get to know the person next to you. Network at your kid's soccer game or the next school PTA meeting. Strike up a conversation with the person behind you in line at the grocery store.

Remember, always be prepared to sell yourself. Provide what I call a simple, repeatable statement of value—something, in other words, that you can say that you know will trigger the person's interest and that will be easy to repeat to others. Companies do this, too. Think about how you first learned about Google. It wasn't through some elaborate advertisement. It was most likely from someone in your network saying, "Search for anything and everything on the Internet for free at google.com." By creating a statement like this, those you connect with can easily pass along information about you.

Trying to find a job in such an overcrowded job market can be a daunting task. But by placing a renewed focus on networking, you open yourself up to many more opportunities than just the ones on the job boards. Every time you make a new connection you get that much closer to a great new opportunity.

Maribeth Kuzmeski, founder of Red Zone Marketing, LLC, Chicago, Illinois, is the author of four books, including The Connectors: How the World's Most Successful Businesspeople Build Relationships and Win Clients for Life *(Wiley, 2009, ISBN: 978-0-470-48818-8). For more information about the book, visit www.redzonemarketing .com and www.theconnectorsbook.com.*

According to Jobvite.com's 2010 Social Recruiting survey, 83 percent of employers plan to use social networks to recruit this year. If you aren't already on business-focused social media sites like LinkedIn, take the time to set up a profile.

Q&A with Manager Scott Pingel: What's My Inspiration?

Scott Pingel, city manager, Stanfield, Oregon, was recently interviewed by Rob Carty, ICMA's manager of career services and Next Generation Initiatives. Describing his career path and early thoughts on being a recently hired young manager, Pingel also tells how ICMA's local government management fellowship (LGMF) program helped him prepare for his current management job.

Q: How did the LGMF program help prepare you for the manager's job?

The LGMF program was an integral piece of my preparation in becoming a city manager, mostly in that it provided the opportunity to gain experience and confidence. I was the management fellow in Federal Way, Washington. The former city manager there, Neal Beets, became a great mentor, and continues to be. He basically let me take on whatever projects and roles I felt comfortable with.

More important, he let me take on the authority and responsibility that went along with the projects and roles I took on. Another vital piece of the formula was that Neal made himself available to me when I needed help and direction. Otherwise, he let me figure things out as I went, which was good for me, too.

Q: If you were teaching a class to students of public administration on the subject of "lessons-learned" from your earliest years of work, what would be your top five lessons?

1. **Be proactive.** Go after every project you can get your hands on.

2. **Accept, ask for, and take as much authority and responsibility as your superiors will let you have.** This is not to be power hungry or to subordinate other people to you; it is simply so that you will have sufficient opportunities to gain experience serving, leading, and making decisions that affect a larger group. It usually means you will need to interact with the public, which is vital experience to gain. It will also give you opportunities to make mistakes (see number 3).

3. **Make great mistakes!** I've heard this countless times, and I believe it to be essential to professional development in the public sector. One example I have of making a great (yet senseless) mistake and growing from it is an opportunity I had to work with the Federal Way Diversity Commission.

I was one of the staff for the commission, and as such, I kept track of its budget. There were just a few events that the commission spent money on each year, but I learned a major lesson in being prepared, communicating, and making sure I do my homework when taking on a new roll.

The commission holds a retreat each year, and the year I attended, the retreat was held at a city facility. I assumed that since it was held at a city facility the cost would not be coming out of the commission's budget. Instead of asking questions and ensuring the budget was in order, I went along for several months afterwards reporting to the commission that they had more money to work with than they actually did have.

I did not discover my mistake until about a month before the commission's biggest event of the year. While it was tough to let them know they had less money than they anticipated, it was a mistake that changed the way I approached the rest of my projects and responsibilities. It is a mistake that affects the way I approach my job now.

4. Learn to plan. Early on in my fellowship with the city of Federal Way, I got the most simple, yet most profound advice. The chief financial officer told me to think through the details of each of my projects and figure out what needed to go into each step in order to bring about the purpose of each project. Then make sure to write it all down.

5. Strive to be efficacious. The police chief in Federal Way described efficacy to me as having the attitude that there isn't anything we can't achieve. I believe this is especially essential as you approach residents and customers. It is at the very heart of great customer service. It's not that you will be able to magically make resources appear that you don't have, but it's an attitude that you can take on and collaboratively solve any problem or challenge.

Q: Do you have any challenges with being a young, new manager?

I have not run into any major challenges as a young or a new manager. Stanfield went almost six months without a city manager in place, so most people, both staff and the community, were happy to have someone in the position. The main challenge is getting to know the (mainly recent) history of the city, and the challenges that the city has faced. It's also harder to form your own opinions about people and situations and other issues when you are the new manager with an experienced staff.

The challenges I have faced so far have more to do with generational differences than policy and procedural issues. It's a challenge to balance the needs of a fairly significant older population with those of younger generations, along with the opinions of each on how the city's resources should be spent and how my job should be done.

At the time this article was written, we are preparing to begin the budget season, and I am sure I will have some challenges that generally have to do with being young and new, especially when most staff members I work with have been with the city for 10 or more years.

Q: How has this impacted your personal life? Any unexpected side effects?

Becoming a manager definitely takes more time away from family than any other job I've had. My wife and I both expected this and understood it as we made the decision to accept the position. Having said this, however, it still has an impact. I miss having more time with my wife and boys.

Another side effect is that it is a lot harder to leave work. Until now, I have always been good at not giving work a second thought once I leave my office, but this is much harder to do now that there are so many different aspects to the position. I never thought I'd be so anxious about so many things.

Q: Has the experience uncovered or given rise to new goals or pursuits?

Not yet. It is not necessarily a new goal or pursuit, but it is a goal of mine to be able to get a Ph.D. or a DPA along the way and have the opportunity to teach and train upcoming generations.

Q: What suggestion from a resident have you ended up implementing?

I haven't implemented anything radical yet, but I have been approached with the idea that the city should forgo its relationships with the regional power companies and find grants to put in our own windmills so that we can better control the cost of electricity in Stanfield.

Q: What's the hardest thing to teach your staff?

The hardest thing is getting staff to think budget and to work from a more proactive perspective instead of a reactive perspective. I'd like us to become more strategic in how we carry out the city's business instead of waiting to see what each day brings.

Q: How has your networking and connection with ICMA and managers in the field helped you?

Networking is a skill I am still lacking to a large extent, but I am getting better. The few managers I have been able to get to know in the profession have been hugely influential. They have provided much needed advice and guidance as well as references. I have also really enjoyed getting to know some of the other Management Fellows.

Q: What has been your most significant challenge to date?

Stanfield is currently working on putting a funding package in place for much-needed water system improvements. The improvements, however, may significantly increase the cost of water in the city. As the city's current water infrastructure stands, it is insufficient for the community's demand. We cannot perform much-needed maintenance because we have no backup water or reserve.

Proposed improvements would solve the city's water problems for a long time. The challenge, for me, is twofold: (1) making the necessary improvements while keeping the financial impact as small as possible, and (2) getting good information out to the community, and then helping people understand the urgency of making water system improvements.

Q: Any tips for people—particularly the next generation—looking for work in this economic climate?

Keep at it!! Start looking early and everywhere. While I was only laid off for about five months, it took a year and a half to find a new job. I started looking for a new job in August 2008, after my first year as an ICMA Fellow. At first, we (as a family) just wanted to

stay west of the Mississippi River. But as time went on, we opened up the search to more and more parts of the country.

The city of Federal Way, Washington, where I was an ICMA Fellow, fell on the same hard budget times as other communities, and the Fellow position was cut in August 2009. I was hired as the city manager in Stanfield, Oregon, in January 2010.

Work on your interview skills. Every interview is an opportunity to get better at it. Appreciate and take advantage of all the time you have in school or in your first job. Opportunities to lead people and make decisions in any capacity are priceless as you begin looking to management positions, especially if you want to become a local government manager.

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The Long Reach of Military Experience

How It Influences My Management Career

by Steve Vinezeano

After serving in Desert Shield and Desert Storm in the early 1990s and attaining the rank of captain with the 38th Engineer Company in Karlsruhe, Germany, I decided it was time to return to civilian life. I received my discharge papers, packed my duffle bags, and headed to Frankfurt Airport. I was proud of my national service, but the army for me was always no more than a great place to start, and it was time to begin a new career.

When I returned to my home state of Illinois in the spring of 1992, I—like many returning soldiers—really had no idea what I was going to do beyond applying for graduate school. Although my higher education would be paid for through the Illinois Veteran Grant Program, I had no idea what I wanted to study. I had no career objective.

My Introduction

I could have continued with my undergrad choices of engineering or architecture, but they were no longer my passion. That is when one of my most important mentors at the time, my late father Carmen Vinezeano, recognized my indecision and took the opportunity to introduce me to city management. I really had no idea there was such a profession.

My father had a strong relationship with the then city manager of Rolling Meadows, Illinois, Robert Beezat, who took me under his wing and into his office and allowed me to intern (at no cost to the city, of course). It was during this brief internship that I learned about the local government management profession and, more important, which graduate degree I would pursue—a master's of public administration. Beezat remains one of my most trusted professional mentors to this day.

A quick note about unpaid internships here. Although there is much being written these days about the legality of unpaid internships, I am an advocate of offering such opportunities—at no cost to taxpayers—early in a person's career if it leads to bigger and better things like a real-world education and potential job prospects. If anything, it helps to build your résumé, especially if you don't have prior experience in local government. In my case, it was an unpaid internship that led me to my first employer who met me at an Illinois City/County Management Association event just months before I graduated.

Training and Experience Are Key

Now, after 14 years in the profession, I am able to share how my experiences and activities have influenced, changed, or impacted my career. Although I could discuss many of the unorthodox ways that I chose to improve professionally over the years, I'll note just a few here. I honed my public speaking skills by attending The Second City Training Center in Chicago. I also stayed environmentally progressive by passing the Leadership in Energy and Environment Design exam and being active with the U.S. Green Building Council in Chicago.

It is my military training and experience, however, that I would like to present here, especially because of the increasing number of high-quality veterans and officers leaving military service who may want to consider a local government management career and the managers who may want to hire them.

The Long Reach of Military Experience

The U.S. Department of Labor lists these 10 reasons to hire a veteran:

- Accelerated learning curve.
- Leadership.
- Teamwork.
- Diversity and inclusion in action.
- Efficient performance under pressure.
- Respect for procedures.
- Technology and globalization.
- Integrity.
- Conscious of health and safety standards.
- Triumph over adversity.

I will expand on a few of these attributes and explain how they affected my own management career.

Accelerated learning curve. Veterans have the proven ability to learn new skills and concepts. All soldiers know what it is like to be thrown into a new situation and be expected to do their best to succeed. It starts with basic training, continues with your military occupational specialty training, and then your first duty assignment.

My first duty assignment as the leader of the 2nd platoon of the 38th Engineer Company not only was in another country, but it was two days before a major briefing to the battalion commander for a battlefield exercise. Sleeping on a cot next to my desk for my first two nights in Germany, preparing for what was later a successful briefing, taught me early on that I was expected to learn new skills and concepts quickly and to apply them effectively.

To this day, I take pride in my ability to accept any project, study it, and complete it successfully. Before the floods of 2008 in Illinois, for example, I knew very little about stormwater; but when the mayor asked me to be the head staff member on a commission to investigate and report on stormwater in the village, I provided a technically accurate stormwater report that was later praised by stormwater engineering firms.

The fact that an in-house staff member could tackle this project enhanced the village's productivity. I credit my military experience for giving me the courage to take on projects outside my comfort zone.

Leadership. Veterans understand the practical ways to manage behaviors for results. One of the biggest misconceptions about military leadership is that it is based on the ability to just bark an order to get something done. That couldn't be further from the truth, unless you are that unlucky officer who wakes up in your tent next to a live hand grenade.

Leaders from the military learn to lead by example and to gain respect through competency, inspiration, and compassion for their soldiers. Military leaders encourage their subordinates to be active in the decision-making process. Military leaders are taught that being a good leader is also being a good and active follower.

Over the years, I've worked with four public managers as an assistant manager, and in each case I made it clear through my actions that I was accountable, dependable, and loyal.

But I also made a point of being an active follower. I did this by never approaching them with a problem that I hadn't already thoroughly worked through. More important than anything for me is knowing that the managers I worked with should expect me to approach them if I question an issue, but they should always be able to count on me to accept a right and proper command decision, own it, and carry it out to the best of my abilities. Military leadership is about being an active leader and an active follower.

Efficient performance under pressure. Veterans understand the rigors of tight schedules and limited resources, and they know the critical importance of staying with a task until it is done right. Soldiers leaving military service today, because of the likelihood that they served under fire in Iraq or Afghanistan, understand performance under pressure.

I find it difficult to explain here, in a few words, the pressures felt by a soldier or officer when given a short timeline, few resources, and a mission that is important far beyond the service member's unit. When soldiers are put in these situations, they truly do have the greater good in mind. Sure, they think about their families, squad members, and themselves; but through training and commitment, they willingly put their lives on the line for their country. Now, that truly is pressure to perform.

Let's ratchet that pressure down a few hundred turns to pressure situations that local government managers may find themselves involved with on a normal day. To this day, the manager I currently work with thinks that one of my crowning achievements was the successful planning and execution of a community event in less than two weeks' time, with limited funding, in cooperation with a local business that is extremely important to the community's economy.

This local business was bringing in 150 personnel from around the country to participate in a community improvement project that needed to be sustainable in nature; however, there was no project, no location for the project, no plans, and no time. The project turned out to be what is now referred to as the Niles Community Rain Garden, which remains a bright spot in the community's list of sustainable successes.

It has earned international recognition and has been supported during the past two years with more than $23,000 in donations from the community. Again, I credit my military experience for being able to hunker down and do my best with the resources I was given.

What I believe is important for young veterans to know, and those people who might hire them, is that they too possess these and other attributes gained from their military service that could make them great candidates for a service career in local government management.

So, my recommendation to a veteran reading this article is this: after you take time to acclimate to civilian life, research the profession at websites like ilcma.org or icma.org, and reach out to the local government manager (or assistant manager) in your community. If you like what you see, take that college money you earned and head off to earn your MPA.

Steve Vinezeano, ICMA-CM, is assistant village manager, Niles, Illinois (scv@vniles.com).

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A Manager's Creative Side

A Poem for Managers

This poem was written by Gary Brown, city manager, Floydada, Texas, and published in the March 2010 issue of the Management Messenger newsletter, published by the Texas City Management Association. Kevin Carruth, ICMA-CM, city manager, Paris, Texas, was moved by its content and submitted it to *PM* for publication consideration.

City Management/City Manager

"What is city management?" The professor did ask.
Preparing students for employment, this is his task.
After much thought the students began to talk,
Through their ideas about city management they each began to walk.

Many ideas were presented and most were on track,
The professor was pleased with the students' understanding and tack.
When thoughts about city management were no longer being spoken,
The silence, by the professor, was about to be broken.

"Now that your ideas about city management are known,
I want knowledge about what a city manager is to be sown.
City management and city manager are not the same,
I want you to know what is required when you have this name."

The students looked bewildered and then they recognized,
What the professor had said and then they realized
That there really is a difference between the two.
Get the students thinking, "Is this what I really want to do?"

The discussion began and different traits came out,
Different students seeing differently about this bout.
None seemed to know what a city manager really was,
Nor exactly what it is that a city manager does.

One student finally spoke up, speaking very clear,
You could tell to him the subject was very dear.
"Your ideas are great, but that is not what a city manager is,
I know, for all my life, my dad, a city manager's job is his."

The student moved to the front of the room to give his speech,
This would be an impromptu talk with which he would teach
The other students about what they should expect
In this field of hands-on and high tech.

A Manager's Creative Side

"Passion, desire, and willingness to sacrifice,
Being able to keep a job is sometimes like rolling dice.
You will be living in a house that is made of glass,"
Was the way the student started speaking to the class.

He then went into detail about different parts of the job,
"Are you willing to let the job time from the family rob?"
Aspects about the job that the students did not know,
Were what the speaker was beginning to show.

"You have to be able to lead, follow, and get out of the way,
Speak to the citizens watching what you say.
Please the council and employees, too,
Is just a part of what you will have to do."

At the end of the day, someone, maybe yourself, will ask,
Did you do your best at each and every task?
Were the results, whether completed or yet to be done,
The best for all, each and everyone?

There is only one person who is the hardest to please,
It is the person in the mirror that the manager does see.
"You will not please everyone, no matter had hard you try,
I have seen my dad at day's end just sit down and cry."

Maybe over a job that did not go just exactly right,
Or an employee did or said something that caused him fright.
Could it have been disciplining or even dismissal of a friend
That brought this sadness to his day's end?

You will know within yourself when the day does end,
By the feelings that your pride outward does send.
The job is tough, but for those who dare,
You can show the citizens that you really care.

Now go forth and apply yourself to your best,
Take the challenge, stand up to the test.
Years from now, when your career is winding down,
Know within yourself you have helped improve your town.

From the Frying Pan to the Fryer: Practical Tips on Career Advancement from a Recent Graduate

by J. Scott Sellers

Public sector . . . private sector . . . public sector? In March 2006, I was one month away from graduating with an MPA from Brigham Young University (BYU) and had no prospects for employment. I was currently interning in city management and hoped to find a permanent position soon. Every evening I would put the kids to bed, get online, and begin surfing all of the public sector job sites that I could think of. It seemed I was caught in the classical catch-22 of looking for an entry-level job that required at least three to five years of experience. I was ready to give up on the public sector and begin searching elsewhere for employment. Had I persevered this far just to regret my decision to get an MPA?

As I was about to retire from my virtual pavement pounding one night, my older sister signed into Instant Messenger from Chicago. I unloaded on her my frustrations of trying to find a job when nobody was hiring. I explained how I had even considered private sector positions but that the MPA did not translate well to the corporate world. How was I going to provide for my family after my internship ended? Stepping back into the role of Big Sister, she asked me, "Just what is an MPA, and why would you want to be a city manager?"

Choosing an MPA

My path into the public sector started in eighth grade although I did not know it at the time. I needed some volunteer hours in anticipation of my Eagle Scout advancement, so I volunteered to be the computer specialist on the Bountiful, Utah, City Youth Council. Although I contributed toward several great community projects, I finished the year without any idea of how the city was managed.

During my first two years of college I had no career prospects. I was newly married and needed a steady nine-to-five job that could provide enough income for a family. After six declared majors I finally settled on recreation management (not necessarily the quintessential day job, but it would get me through college!). To validate my decision, I interviewed several recreation directors in nearby communities. One director referred me to Ricky Horst, the city manager of South Jordan, Utah, who had begun his career as a recreation director.

As I walked into Mr. Horst's office I was immediately envious of the inviting atmosphere. The room was spacious and accentuated with oak furniture, comfortable leather chairs, and large sun-filled windows. Ricky explained how he had spent the first portion of his career mowing lawns (at times with his own mower), working late hours, and receiving little pay. Sure, he enjoyed it, but now he was working daytime hours, was better able to provide for his family, and made decisions that positively influenced the entire community! Incredibly, after this discussion, it

still did not occur to me to pursue an advanced public administration degree.

After graduating, I took the rather non-recreational job of working as a financial adviser for the MONY Group. Although this job gave me the finance experience I would later appreciate, it was commission-based and provided me with only a paltry stipend that depleted after six months. I calculated that I was working for about 50 cents an hour. To make matters worse, the office was an hour's drive from my little apartment. My wife had recently given birth to our first child, and our financial and emotional reserves were exhausted.

In absolute desperation—and with a prayer in my heart—I sequestered myself in a room one evening and navigated to BYU's online graduate catalog. I began reading at the top of the list—accounting, anthropology, Arabic. I read each of the course descriptions and, one by one, concluded that I was not a candidate for any of these degrees. By the time I reached the letter P I knew I was destined to become an organ-grinder.

But suddenly I began reading about the most incredible program—public administration. All of the right buzzwords were in the course descriptions:

13 Tips for Upward Movement

1. **Fill your plate, and then some.** The practical experience you will gain from a wide variety of projects will set you apart from the rest. You must show that you are willing to go well above and beyond the norm to be noticed.

2. **Request high-level projects.** Managers want to know how many successful—and important—projects you have directly supervised. If you aren't gaining that experience now, find an unmet need that fits your abilities and talents and propose a project to the manager.

3. **Education and training are indispensable.** Although it might not fit the budget, extra credentials and certifications enhance a résumé. I highly recommend gaining as much economic development training as possible. An understanding of statistics is also a great asset to a community. Other credentials you might want to work toward would be the Certified Public Manager credential, the Certified Economic Developer credential, and the ICMA Credentialed Manager.

4. **Learn Spanish.** I interrupted my college education for two years to live in Peru. Speaking Spanish has helped me a great deal on the job, allows me to interact with most members of the community, and it looks great on a résumé.

5. **Gain as much economic development and budgeting experience as possible.** Did I already mention this? Typical local government managers spend a majority of their time on these two functions.

6. **Strengthen your résumé with awards and recognition.** Remember, you are trying to prove that you are management material.

7. **Write a grant.** A successful grant can more than make up the cost of your salary, which looks impressive to those deciding on your employment.

8. **Be willing to relocate.** My wife and I were adamant about living near family until the perfect job opened in the Midwest. This proved to be a great move for our little family, and we are now content to be five hours away from our families.

9. **Select good references.** Listing college professors and family friends on your résumé signals that you are inexperienced. If you don't know any managers, then introduce yourself to some and offer your assistance on a project.

10. **Read, read, read!** In addition to reading biographies and history, familiarize yourself with current events. Read the local newspaper and the newspaper where you have job interviews. Also read minutes of council meetings to become familiar with local issues.

11. **Don't text message and chat online while at work.** If you have time to burn then you are squandering an opportunity to impress senior management (and wasting taxpayer dollars). In the current market, those who are ambitious and eager for assignments will surpass those who wait to be asked. It is difficult to obtain a positive reference from a manager who thinks you are wasting time.

12. **Don't give up!** After months of searching without any luck, I was ready to defect to the private sector or to the state or federal sector. With persistence, you will be rewarded.

13. **Relax.** Don't expect to hop into the perfect job right out of college or to have the understanding of a seasoned manager. After three years, I am finally beginning to understand many of the complexities that a manager faces every day. Don't be afraid to ask questions and take risks, and don't be discouraged if you are completely baffled by certain issues. Experience will bring more confidence and ability, which in turn will open new opportunities to expand your experience.

altruism, service, community, family, stability, and so forth. I noticed that the program was part of the Marriott School of Management and required a strong quantitative background—something I had successfully avoided while pursuing my degree in recreation management.

Undaunted, the following day I picked up the phone and made an appointment to talk to the admission committee. A few days later I spoke with each faculty member on the committee, explaining why I would be a good fit for the program. Amazingly, they took me at my word and accepted me with a scholarship.

Gaining Practical Experience

When I began the MPA program in 2004, I still did not fully grasp what a local government manager was, but at least I had two years to find out. The program was brutal, requiring 18 credits per semester plus an internship. After the first semester, an opportunity arose for a group of students to conduct a build-out analysis for the city of Syracuse, Utah. I immediately volunteered along with five others. We combined this project with course projects that were due from such other classes as statistics, quantitative analysis, and budgeting. Through this hands-on experience, I began to understand the complexities of local government.

During the two years of my graduate program, I volunteered for everything I could think of. I began a year-long paid internship with the city of Lehi, Utah, which taught me the budgeting process and honed my newly acquired statistical skills. I was also able to work on a budget document that received the Government Finance Officers Association Distinguished Budget Presentation Award.

I worked with another team of graduate students analyzing the feasibility of a business improvement district for the city of Payson, Utah. For the city of Alpine, Utah, I wrote the parks and recreation element of its general plan (who says undergraduate degrees aren't worth much?). I was also elected by my peers to serve as the class president.

Finding Employment

During the last months of the MPA program, I networked with everybody I could think of in hopes of landing my first job. The golden contact turned out to be my older sister, which brings me back to our earlier conversation. As we continued chatting online that night, I told her about the incredible experiences I had enjoyed during the MPA program. I explained that being a city manager is an incredibly stressful—yet rewarding—responsibility but is driven by an intense desire to serve and enhance the quality of life for a community. I also told her that I did not want to abandon this career path but that things weren't panning out as planned. After a

brief pause, she said that what I had just spoken about sounded similar to the job her coworker's brother-in-law had. She said that she would e-mail him and ask if he would offer me some career advice.

The next day, I received a phone call from the Centralia, Illinois, city manager, Grant Kleinhenz. He told me about receiving an e-mail from my sister and understood that I was searching for a job. He also informed me that he was actively recruiting an assistant city manager and that he would love to see my résumé (which I quickly e-mailed after I hung up). A month later I was in Centralia, Illinois, interviewing for the position, and a month after that I began my career in public administration.

A Variety of Projects and Responsibilities

With the experience I had gained during my internships, I immediately began work on the creation of a citizen survey. I also developed a budget document that won another GFOA Distinguished Budget Presentation Award. I created a capital improvements program, strategic plan, and a performance measurement system that won special recognition awards from GFOA for both capital improvements and performance measures. The performance measurement system also won the Certificate of Achievement from ICMA's Center for Performance Measurement.

The city had an untouched fund that was collecting revenues from a cable franchise agreement. I was able to use a portion of these funds to begin a city-operated cable network. The city began broadcasting its council meetings as well as community events and capital project updates. I also gained valuable experience in easement acquisition, property appraisals, annexations, website development, street and waterline projects, and department head supervision.

The most beneficial responsibility I had in Centralia was to work on various economic development initiatives. I attended courses and ultimately graduated from the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute. I also attended classes relating to economic development at the ICMA annual conferences.

Putting my education to practice, I worked closely with the city manager, community development director, and economic development director to create two tax increment financing districts and enterprise zone incentives. We bought, sold, and rehabilitated commercial and residential properties downtown, all while making needed streetscape improvements that enhanced the walkability and viability of the heart of the city.

Moving Up

After two wonderful years in Centralia, I heard the great Rocky Mountains calling my name. I found

Montrose, a mid-sized city in the heart of Colorado that was hiring for an assistant city manager, and submitted my résumé. The city was looking for economic development experience and on the strength of my tenure in Centralia I was selected from a pool of 104 candidates.

Now, after a year in Montrose, I have accomplished what I only dreamed about three years ago. We had our fourth child six months ago, and I am on a steady income with steady hours. I never dreamed how amazing the local government profession would be—and I love every minute of it. Sure, work can be stressful at times, but I don't know of another profession that offers the quality of life, the responsibility, and the rewards of local government management.

I reflect back on those difficult job-searching months, and I am grateful that I stuck with the public sector. Although every individual's path will be different, the journey is definitely worth it!

J. Scott Sellers is assistant city manager, Montrose, Colorado (ssellers@ci.montrose.co.us).

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Aspire to Be an Administrator: Views from Those Who've Been There

by Franklin Wu

Career pathways of local government administrators seem to be an intriguing subject among young professionals working in local government. While it is safe to assume that every administrator has unique personal career experiences, little is known about whether any pattern or any factors may influence the career development of a local administrator. Does formal education make a difference? What are the potential obstacles? Would gender have any effect on the outcome?

A young professional I mentored asked these exact questions. Not really knowing much about the subject, I carried out some research and quickly realized that information is limited and empirical research almost nonexistent. To gain a better insight, there is no better place to start than by asking the municipal administrators who are already in these positions and learn from their opinions and personal experiences.

To accomplish this task, a survey was designed to probe the various elements that play a role in the career pathway of an administrator. An online survey consisting of 21 questions was sent to all 357 municipal administrators in the province of Ontario, Canada. A total of 105 administrators responded, resulting in a 29.4 percent return rate.

Data were sorted to identify significant patterns worth noting. The results generally confirm several common perceptions about career pathways of administrators. Several surprises also turned up, and they may dispel a few myths.

1. Education

In the pursuit of a local government manager career, it is generally an accepted view that formal education is a significant success factor. Surprisingly, our respondents offer a different perspective. When municipal administrators were asked to rank the significance of a number of factors they considered most important in helping them move up in rank, formal education ranked seventh in priority sequence. Education was behind performance, communication skills, leadership skills, interpersonal skills, experience, and supportive family.

The respondents were also asked to determine whether there was any difference between holding a bachelor's degree and a postgraduate degree for shaping their careers. Conventional wisdom leads us to believe a postgraduate degree provides a definitive edge over a bachelor's degree, but 89 percent indicated no difference. This view is contrary to most municipal administrators' job postings, which require a postgraduate degree.

Upon further analysis of the data, it was evident that 71 percent of the total respondents came from local governments with a population size of under 20,000, suggesting a close correlation between lesser educational requirements and small municipalities. Administrators from larger municipalities offered a different perspective.

Of the 29 percent of administrators from municipalities with more than 20,000 populations, 73 percent indicated that a postgraduate degree is more important than a bachelor's degree in their pursuit of a career in municipal administration. So, if your career goal is to be an administrator in a small community, there does not appear to be any need to rush off to get an MPA or MBA. But if your career plan includes a move to a larger local government, it may be prudent to consider a postgraduate degree.

Does any one particular discipline of studies offer an appreciable edge over others? The data yielded three distinct groups of studies.

The survey results showed that planning, business, and public administration degrees accounted for 59.17 percent of the educational background of municipal administrators (see Figure 1). It's easy to understand why business and public administration are two of the most relevant disciplines, but it is not clear why individuals with an urban planning background enjoy such a significant edge over other disciplines.

The answers to this are somewhat linked to the views of the respondents as they were asked to rank the factors that were important in influencing their career pathways.

2. Factors Influencing Career Pathway

The second most important question for many has to be: What are the critical factors that contribute to landing the position of a municipal administrator? If you are in the municipal administrator recruiting business, there are ample expert opinions from which to draw in designing your own selection criteria.

Few opinions are available, however, from those who have gone through the selection process and then landed the municipal administrator positions. If the goal of a council or a professional recruiter is to find a candidate who shares the same views and values as the council, the survey results may offer some insight in order to reduce a potential mismatch, which I suspect is one of the major causes of administrators' short tenure.

With this in mind, the respondents were asked to rate separately several competency factors that they thought were either most important or least important in assisting them on their career paths. The responses to these individual factors were then grouped in accordance to their order of the most important factor (see Figure 2).

Respondents' answers clearly establish three distinctive groups of factors. The top group of leadership, performance, communication, experience, and interpersonal skill factors contains a high concentration of people skills. These competencies weighed heavily in the minds of the administrators.

Somewhat surprising is the relatively low rating of the education factor. Education and experience usually go hand in hand in every municipal administrator job posting, and they are generally considered to carry similar if not equal weight in candidates' overall evaluations. Our data suggest otherwise, and those in the recruiting business may want to recalibrate their weighing system.

Easily lost in the consideration of one's career pathway is the factor of a supportive family. For those who aspire to be an administrator where internal promotion is not an option, it could mean relocation and uprooting family. With 39 percent of the respondents considering this factor most important and 48.5 considering it somewhat important, it is worthwhile to discuss career plans with family. Work-life balance is a critical component of any career plan and pursuing your dream as an administrator should not be an exception.

Figure 1. Educational Background of Municipal Administrators

Top-tier disciplines	
Business administration	20.20%
Urban planning	20.17%
Public administration	18.80%
Second-tier disciplines	
Accounting/finance	7.20%
Law/legal	5.70%
Engineering	5.70%
Third-tier disciplines	
Human resources	1.40%
Economic development	1.40%
Recreation	1.40%
Other disciplines	18.03%

Figure 2. Factors Important to the Success of a Local Government Administrator in Ontario, Canada, by Percentage.

Competency factors	Most important	Somewhat important	Neutral	Not very important	Least important
Leadership skills	83.3	15.2	1.5	0	0
Performance record	78.7	19.7	1.6	0	0
Communication skills	73.8	24.7	1.5	0	0
Experience	73.2	25.4	1.4	0	0
Interpersonal skills	72.3	27.7	0	0	0
Supportive family	39.0	48.5	7.9	3.1	1.5
Post-graduate degree	31.6	33.4	18.4	11.6	5.0
Bachelor degree	25.4	47.7	17.5	6.3	3.1
Having a mentor	15.9	28.6	25.4	17.5	12.6
Networking	15.4	40.1	27.7	7.7	9.2

Source: Author's survey.

3. Time, Age, and Longevity

Everyone in the local government field recognizes that it takes time to reach the highest position in an organization, but few have any idea how many years it will take or how many promotions or job changes are needed to get there. Some have given up the dream and are resigned to the notion that it is not worth the venture as retirement looms by the time they get to the top.

Our data suggested that the fear of a long journey is more of a myth than a reality, as 41.90 percent of the respondents achieved the top municipal job within 10 years from their first entry job in a local government. This number rises to 80.90 percent within 20 years.

If most individuals enter municipal service at the age of 25, they can reach the top by age 45, which leaves plenty of years to move to larger communities before one would even contemplate retirement.

The above observation is validated by the responses to a similar question where respondents were asked to identify the age group at which they assumed their first position as a municipal administrator:

Under 40 years of age = 48.40%
Under 45 years of age = 65.50%
Under 50 years of age = 85.80%

Based on the survey results, it would appear that localities have little to fear about losing a whole generation of administrators owing to pending retirement.

What should be of concern is the short tenure for an administrator, as our survey data indicated a weighted average of 4.85 years that an administrator in Ontario stays at the top position in a given municipality. ICMA reports that the average tenure of a city or county manager in the United States is 7.2 years. No shortage of opinions exists on the causes of such a short tenure in Ontario, and this would be an interesting research subject. Certainly many incumbent administrators would relish such knowledge.

Unless you have no issue with the potential short tenure and you are blessed with a supportive family to move around, the true challenge may not lie with getting that first job as an administrator but rather trying to stay on long enough to truly make a difference to the organization. For some administrators, 4.85 years may be just long enough to get to know the council members and the senior staff.

Few people, if any, will step into an administrator's position fresh from their university classes. It is safe to assume everyone will start somewhere in the private or public sector and work up the ladder. The survey data suggest that on average an individual will achieve 2.50 to 3.00 promotions before reaching the top, with an average time of 4.48 years between promotions.

If you are working on a career plan to be an administrator, this information may be helpful for charting your personal path with realistic and attainable time frames.

4. Gender

No one needs to be reminded that there are few female colleagues at the many administrators' functions, at least at the ones I have attended in the past decade. Before we speculate on the cause, it is important to see whether the survey results support this casual observation.

We classified the total of 357 municipal administrators listed in the Ontario municipal directory according to gender and matched gender with population size of the municipality to see how female administrators were represented overall and to determine if there was any significant difference in the size of municipalities they represent.

Female administrators made up 29.58 percent of all municipal administrators in the province of Ontario, or just a little less than one in three administrators. This proportion leaps to 38.30 percent in municipalities with less than 20,000 in population. This percentage drops to about 12.50 percent, however, in municipalities above the 20,000 population mark. This is a significant underrepresentation as female administrators at this municipal population level represent just a little over one person per every 10 administrators. Although women have almost as many opportunities as their male counterparts in landing a position as administrator in small municipalities, one has to wonder if there is a glass ceiling preventing women from moving to larger communities.

The point here is not to seek an answer to this question but to raise awareness among the potential female administrators and assist their understanding of a subject that seldom draws attention from researchers and municipal practitioners.

5. Other Observations

There were several other interesting findings. The most surprising data are that 57.10 percent of municipal administrators have worked for the private sector and 33.30 percent have experiences in other levels of governments. This leaves a scant 9.60 percent of municipal administrators with career paths solely within the confines of municipal government.

Figure 3. Breakdown of Local Government Administrators in Ontario on the Basis of Gender, 2008.

Population of municipality	Male administrators		Female administrators	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Under 20,000	145	61.70	90	38.30
20,000–50,000	55	88.71	7	11.29
Over 50,000	50	86.21	8	13.79
Total	250	70.42	105	29.58

Source: Ontario Municipal Directory, 2008.

This finding clearly confirms that a pathway toward a career as an administrator involves promotional steps outside a local government environment. Whether this increases an individual's chances of becoming a municipal administrator remains unknown, but this finding contradicts the popular belief that administrators generally lack private sector experience or experience outside the municipal environment.

From a career planning perspective, 53.90 percent of the respondents made career plans to be municipal administrators. This leaves 46.10 percent in the category of "accidental administrators," those who neither dreamed nor planned to be one. Although the data do not suggest that having a career plan in place would help an individual's quest for the top municipal job, the data may provide a road map and help cope with surprises along the journey.

Administrators deal with problems and issues that constantly challenge their ability and resourcefulness to put out fires and to survive the occasional crisis.

Therefore, it is not unusual to find administrators willing to share a few horror stories and some personal experiences.

All these trials and tribulations led me and many of my colleagues to believe that municipal administrators must hate their jobs. But, before you jump ship, you may want to know that an overwhelming 98.40 percent of the administrators said "yes!" when asked if they enjoy their positions.

The survey questionnaire did not probe the reasons for such an extraordinary high rate of satisfaction and that, too, would be an interesting subject for a separate study. Regardless, there is a simple message for the municipal administrator wannabe. If you have already "given your head a shake" and still want to be a municipal administrator, go for it!

Franklin Wu is chief administrative officer, Clarington, Ontario, Canada (fwu01@email.phoenix.edu).

The First 10 Years after an Unpaid Internship

by Joshua Smith

For me May 10, 1999, began in a small motel room in Chillicothe, Missouri. My wife Linda and I (and our cat Ali) were nearing the end of a trip that began a day and a half earlier. On May 8 we had left Palm Harbor, Florida, with a rented trailer that contained all of our worldly possessions and a printed e-mail confirming a job offer for the city of Waukee, Iowa, as an unpaid administrative intern.

Waking up in Chillicothe on that spring morning, I was concerned about getting the trailer to our final destination, which was an apartment complex in West Des Moines, Iowa. I had to have it unloaded and turned in before 5:00 p.m. I also needed to find an unwrinkled suit, dress shirt, and tie in our packed possessions and be at a city council meeting in Waukee that night at 7:00 p.m. so I could be introduced as a new (albeit nonpaid) employee.

Up to that point in my life, I had had little interaction with city government. The only city council meeting I had attended was while I was vacationing in Daytona Beach Shores, Florida, during my senior year of college. I did not attend that council meeting because I was interested in local government but because it was a requirement for a class I was taking in public administration, and I needed a copy of the meeting agenda as proof of attendance.

My path to the internship in Waukee was circuitous. After graduating from a small, private college in South Dakota, the University of Sioux Falls, with a bachelor's degree in organizational behavior and management, I accepted a job as a store manager trainee for JCPenney in Clearwater, Florida. While completing the training program, I attended night school to earn an MBA. During this time, I read the book *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand. This book has had a tremendous impact on my career as a public administrator.

The career path that JCPenney outlined after I completed its training program was not the most exciting.

I was interested in working for one of its international stores or working at the corporate office in Plano, Texas. What I was not interested in for the first 10 years of my career was being arbitrarily transferred from small store to small store at the whim of the company.

My First Decision

After many discussions with my wife, I convinced her to leave the warm climate of Florida and move back to our home state of Iowa and for me to immediately pursue two things: a job that did not pay anything and a second master's degree—this one in public administration at Iowa State University.

The logic I employed to reach this conclusion was simple: I ultimately wanted a job where I could choose the community I wanted to live, and because most communities had professional staff, I would have ample opportunity to go where I wanted.

To cement this decision, I called a high school classmate who was the only person I knew who worked for a local government. That call was to Doug Boldt, who is the city manager of Tipton, Iowa (at that time he was the director of public works). Apparently I called too early in the morning because Doug was still sleeping. He was nice enough, however, to answer my questions, which verified (in my mind) that I was making the right decision.

I remember thinking to myself as I was driving the U-Haul to Iowa the morning of May 10 that the career path of a city manager was not much different from a store manager of a JCPenney. You completed an internship or training program, became a department manager or perhaps an assistant manager, and finally you reached the pinnacle—you become the manager!

I remember sitting with the public at the May 10 city council meeting with a large agenda packet in my

Joshua A. Smith
Leadership Blueprint

Remain strategic. Ensure that my work—and that of my executive team—is strategic. All of our goals and activities need to be aligned with the overarching goals and mission of the larger organization. Any individual who reports directly to me will have a set of measurable objectives during a specific time frame.

Be persistent and work hard. Success is a marathon, not a sprint. Never give up.

Accept accountability. Hold myself accountable to the highest standards of behavior. The litmus test for every action will be: Would I be comfortable with the details of my actions on the front page of a newspaper?

Embrace responsibility. Appreciate and embrace the responsibility that comes with being a leader. Always realize that many people depend on me.

Value meetings. Embrace the importance of team meetings and individual one-on-one meetings. These meetings are not a nuisance or a distraction. They are the day-to-day manifestation of leadership.

Create a top team. Create a team of A players. My goal is to hire, retain, and promote only the best. If someone is a C player, my job is to turn that person into an A player or help locate another role that provides a better chance to be an A player. I will hold my team accountable to the highest standards of performance and behavior.

Treat direct reports as adults. Treat direct reports as bright, capable, responsible adults. I am not all knowing or blessed with superior judgment because of my position. I don't need to be aware of all details, be involved in all decisions, or dictate how they do their work. Treating employees as inferiors and micromanaging is the ultimate form of disrespect and poor leadership.

Open up. Ask questions and be open to other possibilities. Listening as a leader means fighting the natural urge to evaluate and react instead of listening to truly understand another person's view and consider the possibilities.

Encourage innovation. Continually stress the importance of innovation when reviewing operational issues and always be open to new ideas.

hand and thinking to myself that a lot of work had gone into creating the agenda packet, but the council voted quickly and often with no discussion on most of the agenda items.

The one item that did generate considerable discussion was a request for monies that were not budgeted. The expense was for new furniture for the new city hall that was under construction on U.S. 6—the existing city hall was located in the small downtown area.

I remember how shocked I was that councilmembers were almost rude in their line of questioning and how uncomfortable the city administrator looked when answering the questions. I made a mental note: always be as prepared as possible to answer questions, even unexpected questions, at city council meetings. I remember leaving the council meeting that night feeling extremely unsure about whether I had made the correct career move.

My First 30+ Days

The first month of the job went slowly. Because I had no experience in any area of local government, the city administrator had me sitting at a folding table in the council chambers and using a typewriter to type labels for the city code books. Sometimes I got lucky: when the city receptionist was out of the office, I was allowed to answer the phone and assist residents with dog licenses and building permit questions as well as work on the quarterly newsletter.

My wife still thought I was crazy because I was working for free and would usually work 45 to 60 hours a week and attend graduate school at nights and on Saturday mornings. At age 25, however, I felt I was already older than several peers who did similar internships at age 21 or 22 and had moved into other, more important roles.

After approximately a month on the job, the city administrator indicated at a staff meeting that the city needed to better coordinate its economic development efforts because of the explosive residential and commercial growth Waukee was experiencing as a western suburb of Des Moines. I approached the administrator privately after the meeting and begged for the opportunity to coordinate the economic development efforts. I reminded him I had an MBA, was working on my MPA, and was willing to work extremely hard.

After some discussion and negotiation, we settled on an hourly wage ($7.00) that would become effective in July 1999 and a new salary effective on January 1, 2000 ($46,000). We also agreed that the city would send me to a basic economic development course in Duluth, Minnesota, in July 1999 and to all three sessions of the Economic Development Institute at the University of Oklahoma, beginning in August 1999. I was ecstatic. After almost two months of working, I was going to get

paid again! Plus, I was no longer the intern but now the director of community development.

The next few months moved quickly as I began to work with development companies on commercial projects ranging from a new McDonald's to courting a large regional mall by a national development company. I also worked with residential developers on the platting process, identifying council issues and helping developers get positive recommendations at the planning and zoning commission meeting and ultimately approval at the council meeting.

Because growth in Waukee was happening so fast, I was given other assignments, including coordinating Waukee's annexation efforts, creating the city's first-ever capital improvement plan, updating the city's Web page, and restructuring how information was prepared for the council, including agenda format, staff report format, and more.

Approximately one year after I started in Waukee, the assistant city administrator resigned his position. The administrator approached me and offered me something I never guessed would happen so quickly—a newly titled position of deputy city administrator.

At age 26, I felt I was making great strides. I also felt the chance I took when I left a good position at JCPenney was validated. Since that time, I have served several great communities, beginning with Monticello, Iowa, which offered me the job of city administrator at age 26, and I began the position at age 27.

My Advice

Take advantage of training opportunities

The first five years of my career, I did not take advantage of many state association (Iowa City Management Association) or national (ICMA) training opportunities. I felt my time was better used at city hall and not traveling to seminars. When I moved to Wisconsin as the town administrator of Cedarburg, the village administrator of Grafton, Wisconsin, Darrell Hofland, encouraged me to do so.

Many of the initiatives that are important to my current community (sustainability, performance measurement, creating a high-performing organization, and so forth) were items discussed and analyzed in great detail at many of the ICMA seminars and conferences I have attended.

In the past three years, I have been fortunate to participate in the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service Senior Executive Institute (SEI) at the University of Virginia, the two-year Leadership ICMA program,

> I read the book *Atlas Shrugged* by Ayn Rand. This book has had a tremendous impact on my career as a public administrator.

and I will attend the second ICMA Gettysburg Leadership Institute in May 2009. I love that my 10-year anniversary in the profession (May 10, 2009) will be capped with this excellent training opportunity.

Create a leadership blueprint

Just before my most recent performance evaluation, one of my elected officials asked me what my leadership blueprint is. I was embarrassed that I could not to my satisfaction extemporaneously discuss what it is. Thus, I spent an entire Saturday jotting notes and reading sections of some of the books listed ahead. That was the genesis of my first written leadership blueprint (see box on page 52). There is no doubt through the coming years that it may change, but I truly believe the core pieces of the blueprint will stay constant for the next 30 years of my career.

Measure twice, cut once

Several times every week of your career you must rely on your intuition and knowledge to make quick decisions. When the opportunity is available, however, identifying important organizational metrics and creating a performance measurement program will make your job much easier by determining progress toward specific defined organizational objectives.

Read, read, read!

I cannot begin to explain how several books have influenced my career. Young administrators should not read only leadership and management books. Some of the books that have heavily influenced my career have been biographies and fiction; works of philosophy and Shakespeare; or history. The top five books I would recommend to a young manager are:

- *Atlas Shrugged* (Ayn Rand)
- *When Pride Still Mattered: A Life of Vince Lombardi* (David Maraniss)
- *Medici Effect: What Elephants and Epidemics Can Teach Us about Innovation* (Frans Johansson)
- *Animal Farm* (George Orwell)
- *Management* (Peter Drucker)

Honorable mention includes several Abraham Lincoln books—*Team of Rivals*; *Tried by War*; and *Lincoln on Leadership*—and any book by Patrick Lencioni.

Surround yourself with young talent as well as older talent

The reason Johansson's *Medici Effect* resonated with me is his discussion regarding associative boundaries

that expertise builds. I truly believe that any organization will become stagnant without young, energetic talent infusing creativity and passion into it.

Conversely, maintaining several professional confidants who are older and have been around the proverbial block a few more times than you will prove invaluable when you need sage advice and wise counsel over a vexing issue.

Joshua Smith, ICMA-CM, is village administrator, Howard, Wisconsin (jsmith@villageofhoward.com).

Wittenberg Local Government Management Internship Program: An Organizational Stimulus Plan for Your Local Government

by Rob Baker

In these challenging and uncertain times, local governments across the nation are doing all they can to get the most bang for the buck in terms of resources used to deliver the essential services citizens need and expect. As many of you scramble to develop shovel-ready projects that could be funded under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act—the economic stimulus bill—do not overlook a program that can help tremendously with your efforts to do more with less.

The ICMA-supported Wittenberg Local Government Management Internship Program (LGMIP) can benefit your organization by providing a group of bright, eager, and energetic interns to help out with those projects that are either sitting on the shelf for lack of resources or that need a jump start of focused attention that your busy department heads and employees are unable to provide in these times of thinly stretched budgets and personnel systems.

Since its inception in 1994 and its new collaboration with ICMA beginning in 2003, the program has provided its local government hosts with enormous benefits that have accrued from the completion of dozens of projects that more than 65 interns have worked on and completed over the years. What we need, though, are more volunteer host local governments to step up and participate. By way of this article, I am asking that you give serious consideration to becoming a host.

What Is It?

LGMIP is predicated on the idea that the interests of the key stakeholders (students, local governments, and universities) can, and should be, mutually rein-

forced. Students all over the country are clamoring for meaningful internship experiences that will enhance their understanding of the real world of local government and help them make important decisions about their futures. At the same time, local governments always have projects that need focused attention, attention that is hard to provide with busy and reduced staff.

Finally, universities are seeking to provide unique, practical, and relevant educational opportunities for their students. LGMIP meets all these goals and has a record of success. The program is open to students from any college or university, is eight weeks in duration and consists of an internship component and a class-seminar component.

Students are placed as interns in a host local government department and given one or more projects to complete by the end of the program. On-site faculty members are accessible each day for students to consult on their projects and to facilitate the independent work that is required for them to complete their assignments.

Students also take a class two nights per week and are required to attend regular local government meetings. The typical schedule for the internship component is 8:00 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Thursday, and 8:00 to 12 noon on Fridays.

Students pay college tuition to participate and receive six to eight hours of college credit for successful completion of the program. The internships are unpaid; the only cost to the host community is to provide housing and utilities for the students and professor during the internship, which has been accomplished at each of our previous locales in a number of creative ways based on available community assets. The

host local government is also responsible for providing projects, a minimum level of staff direction and supervision, along with technical support as necessary, including computer hardware and software as appropriate to the projects that are assigned.

Examples of Student Projects

Students have completed a variety of challenging assignments in each of the past internship programs. Although the projects have been diverse, they all share the same feature of outstanding benefits for the local government sponsor. The key reason local governments have engaged this program is the dramatic impact the completion of several projects at one time can have on the community.

We bring the student power to do the identified tasks and the professional ability to oversee them, smoothly integrating our education of the students with the functions of your daily operations. If there are specific skills required for certain projects, we take these into consideration in our student recruitment and planning efforts.

Here are sample projects from recent years. A more complete list of projects can be found at the university's Web site at www.localintern.org.

Fernandina Beach, Florida (2008)

Community Development Department

- CDBG target neighborhood data collection and GIS mapping.
- Existing land use survey.
- Tree census inventory.

Police Department

- Data collection for accreditation.
- Rewriting and updating policy manual.

Information Technology Department

- Informational programming for CATV access channel.
- Updating and revising Web page information.

City Attorney

- Research and assistance on ordinance writing and revision.
- Research on gaining ferry access to Cumberland Island National Seashore.

Eau Claire County, Wisconsin (2007)

Planning and Zoning

- Conversion of paper land use maps to GIS and creation of property tax database.

- Revision of comprehensive plan.

County Administrator's Office

- Performance budgeting project launch.
- Development of outcome performance measures.

Human Resources

- Revision and updating of personnel policies and employee handbook.

Airport

- Assistance with feasibility study of $15 million airport terminal expansion.
- Research on airport land use development options.

Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin (2007)

Human Resources

- Updating and revision of personnel policies and administrative procedures handbook.

Finance

- Implementing new financial tracking software for special assessments.

Parks and Recreation

- Updating of city's five-year parks and recreation plan.
- Updating of city's forestry management plan.

Meredith, New Hampshire (2005)

Planning and Zoning

- Development of pre-zoning hearing administrative checklist.
- Development of commercial signs and billboards inventory and database.

Police Department

- Comparative research on policies and procedures, and development of policy recommendations relative to possession issues and minors.

Water and Sewer

- Research and recommendations regarding water conservation methods.
- Comparative research on water and sewer rates.
- Revision of town service manual.
- Research for revision of water and sewer ordinances.

Public Works

- Street sign inventory and GPS identification database development.

- GPS identification of culverts and manholes.

Grand Island, Nebraska (2000)

Planning Department

- Conversion of paper land use maps to GIS.
- Updating of landscape ordinance.

Legal Department

- Comparison of first-class city occupancy taxes.
- Study of handicapped parking compliance.
- Development of interlocal agreement for law enforcement records management program.

Community Development

- Community needs survey (CDBG program).

Emergency Management Department

- Update of emergency operating guide and coordination of all agencies and departments in terms of emergency responsibilities.

Key Component of Next Gen Initiatives

ICMA support and sponsorship of this program grows out of its concerted efforts to increase awareness among college students about career opportunities in local government management. This is particularly important in the current climate of increasing devolution of government responsibility to local jurisdictions, coupled with demographic trends indicating that local government administrators are retiring in large numbers and creating a quiet recruitment crisis as vacancies are not being filled fast enough.

LGMIP is one of several ICMA-sponsored initiatives designed to address these concerns. For more information, I encourage you to visit the ICMA Web site and learn more about its next-generation initiatives. These initiatives can succeed only if current local government professionals step up and provide the mentoring and internship opportunities that are necessary for the recruitment of bright young men and women into the profession.

Those colleagues who have agreed to host the LGMIP in the past have great praise for the students' work ethic and products as well as for the general uplift to the organizational culture that having several enthusiastic young people around can add to the work environment. Positive testimonials from local government host professionals are posted on our program Web site. Some brief excerpts from those testimonials illustrate the good impressions the program has made on colleagues around the country.

Cindy Johnson, the former city clerk of Grand Island, Nebraska, for example, noted this about the 2000 program: "The internship program undertaken by the city of Grand Island and Wittenberg University resulted in significant dividends for many. I would recommend it as a valuable learning tool for students, city department directors, and elected officials."

The town administrator of Meredith, New Hampshire, Carol Granfield, noted in her letter that "Meredith had eleven interns… that accomplished more than 15 projects. As a small community with a population of 6,700, which swells to 30,000 in the summer, there is a limited staff to accomplish many needed projects. I would encourage other local governments to participate in this outstanding program, and I would be happy to discuss Meredith's experience in more detail."

Tom McCarty, the county administrator of Eau Claire County, Wisconsin, stated that "The Wittenberg University LGMIP was very successful; the students completed research projects and reports that county and city staff simply did not have the resources to complete. All parties gained a significant benefit as a result of a small investment on the part of Eau Claire County and the city of Chippewa Falls.

"On behalf of the elected officials and staff of Eau Claire County, I would recommend local units of government consider hosting the Local Government Management Internship Program."

Consider Becoming a Host

I hope the information in this article has piqued your interest in considering how the LGMIP might be useful to your efforts to stimulate your organizational culture and to get some much needed work done on important projects for a small investment. We are in need of host local governments each summer and hope to line up two or three hosts every summer so we can engage in better program planning and stable student commitment.

Most immediately, though, the program is looking for hosts for the summer of 2010. If you are interested in the possibility of hosting anytime in the future, please visit our Web site for further information about how to apply, or contact Rob Carty at ICMA (rcarty@icma.org).

You can also contact the program by e-mail (jbaker@wittenberg.edu) or by phone (937-327-6105). I'd be happy to discuss the program with you and answer any questions you might have.

Rob Baker, Ph.D., is professor of political science, Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio (jbaker@wittenberg.edu). We bring the student power to do the identified tasks and the professional ability to oversee them, smoothly integrating our education of the students with the functions of your daily operations. http://jobs.icma.org

Climbing the Mountain: Seeking and Succeeding in Your Next Position

by Charlie Bush, Tansy Hayward, and Noah Simon

Each of the authors of this article recently accepted or was promoted to a new position in local government. For two of us, our new positions required relocating to new communities—a smaller community for one and a new state and community for the other. Our experiences in deciding to seek and accept new positions and then relocate have yielded useful information, tips, and insights into our personal decision making before we moved ourselves and our families.

Looking for a New or Next Job

Many factors were involved in our decisions. For two of us, the decision to change positions was our own drive to challenge ourselves in local government. For the other, it was an opportunity to continue the work within the organization but with an expanded role. In making the decision to look for and change jobs—or even when you look for your first job—you must ask yourself (and your loved ones): Where do I want to go professionally and geographically, and what do I want to do in local government?

For some people, family or other reasons create a tie to a geographic region, state, or city; others may be more nomadic and the professional challenge or opportunity is their driving force. In either case, the decision needs to be made with your spouse and family. Everyone should be comfortable with the decision. In local government management, professional happiness is often linked to personal happiness.

Your next job or your new job should be an opportunity to learn, grow, and apply your skills and knowledge. Here are some questions you should ask yourself.

If you are looking for a job as an assistant or department head, will the position enable you to learn from an experienced manager and staff? Will the opportunity and organization also allow for you to grow personally?

For the position of manager, is it one that offers a unique challenge or set of challenges that will enable you to apply your skills? Is the position, regardless of title, one that will allow you to develop, obtain new skills and experiences, and position you for future opportunities?

Thoroughly examine the environment to ensure that it is a good fit for you. Heed red flags and other warning signs you might notice—political instability, a sense that the organization's culture or values may not be a good fit for you, or concerns about the community in which you would be working. Know what you are getting into.

Opportunities abound in local government—in communities of different sizes, urban and rural environments, and variations in form of government. Our profession is rare because we have a lot of freedom to go to different places and do different things.

Before applying for a position, visit the community if at all possible. This is especially important if the community is new to you or if you are going from rural to urban, small to large, or vice versa. It is important for you to take the time to visit and feel comfortable with and in the new community. Include your spouse and family; see if it feels like "home" for all of you.

Do Your Homework

Learn as much as you can about the job, the organization, and the community. Use the Internet, read local newspapers, research issues on the organization's Web page, watch council meetings online and in person, and network. Talk to other local government officials—if possible, the former or current person in the position—local and regional associations, and councils of government.

Get to know as much as possible about the organization and community, and share that information with your family. Try to do much of this before you apply and certainly before the interview. It will help you make the right decision about applying and accepting the job if it is offered. It will also help you put together a better application.

Reeling It In

After you are comfortable with pursuing the job, it is time to apply. Your application should be meticulous. Be sure to have someone else review it before you submit it. Leave yourself plenty of time to do a good job of writing it. Do not hesitate to ask some of your peers for suggestions.

We have received countless suggestions and pieces of advice for writing cover letters and approaching application questions. There are many right ways to go about it. The key is to present yourself in the best light possible for that specific position while being forthright about your values, experiences, and qualities.

When it comes to interviewing, practice makes perfect. Review your research, your application, and the job advertisement to develop strategies for answering particular questions as you pursue the position.

If you are working with an executive search firm, see what additional information you can glean from that firm. When you have done this, take time to practice interviewing. Many typical questions are freely available on the Internet. Practice out loud and have others ask you questions as well.

During the actual interview, be sure to present yourself with a bit of enthusiasm. Answer questions completely but succinctly, and take time to read the body language of your interviewers. You can adjust your answers or your points of emphasis according to the reaction you are receiving.

You should be able to determine whether you are connecting with your audience. Be prepared to ask questions of your interviewers. Remember that they are trying to impress you as much as you are trying to impress them. If all goes well, you will get the offer, have an opportunity to negotiate, and eventually land the job.

Learning the Organizational Ropes

As new people in established organizations, we found the strategies presented below to be valuable for acclimating to the organization and organizational culture. It is important to build relationships and gain, earn, and build trust and respect with your peers.

During the first few days and weeks, listen, learn, and absorb. Watch and learn from department heads or the manager. If you are the manager, absorb as much as possible. You will hear a lot of things from a

Figure 1. Physical Attributes/Behaviors That Negatively Influence Perception of Professionalism
This graphic identifies four of the attributes that, according to 52 participants in a survey prior to the 2008 ICMA Annual Conference session presented by the authors, most negatively influence perceptions.

	Very Negatively	Somewhat Negatively
Poor Dress	32.7	55.8
Gum Chewing	26.9	55.8
Use of Slang	15.4	61.5
Tattoos	13.5	63.5
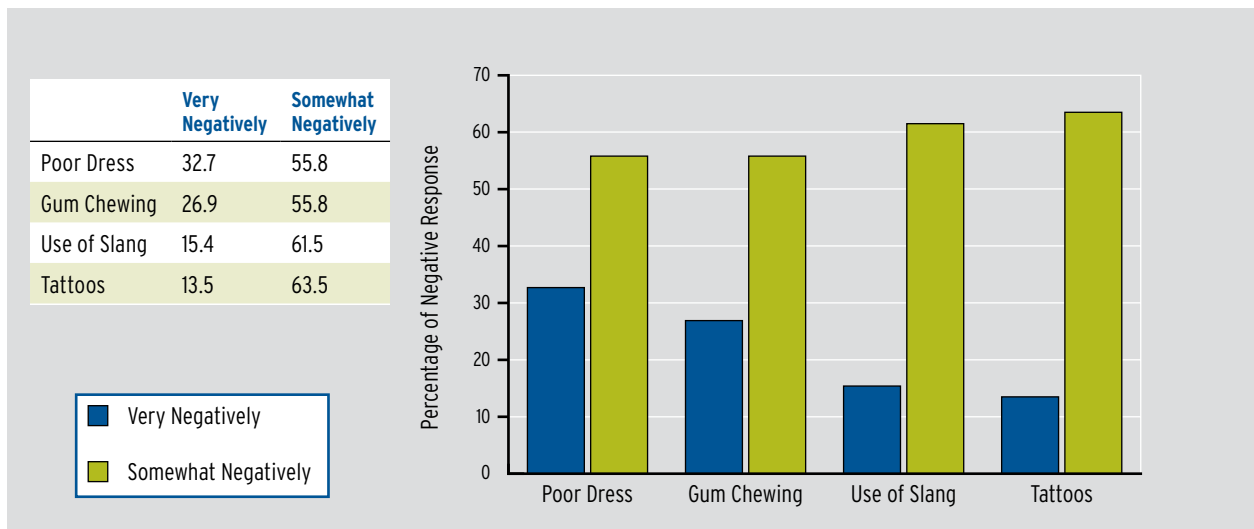
lot of different sources, but you will not have the full contextual understanding of the situation necessary to be able to form accurate opinions.

Be patient and listen; act when you are comfortable that you have an accurate assessment of the situation. With your staff, council, and new community, be open about your background, values, and plans. Doing so will build support and will help to ease anxiety that comes with any change in leadership.

Before your start date, read as much as you can about current projects, the budget, goals, and objectives. Spend time over e-mail and on the phone with staff, the manager, and department heads. Use the time to review projects and issues and become familiar with people and responsibilities so that when you arrive, you can hit the ground running. Find out from staff who the key players and stakeholders are for some of the more pressing issues.

As a manager, assistant, or department head, be visible in your first few days and weeks. Meet and talk with the staff and community leaders. Listen to their ideas and concerns.

In the company of a variety of staff members, take tours of facilities, project sites, and the community. See the community from their perspective, and gain an understanding of the issues and their points of view. Spend time in their shoes, meet with them, spend time doing what they do.

Career-Building Programs through ICMA

Leadership ICMA. Join a competitive, intensive two-year ICMA University program designed to cultivate key competencies needed for successful leadership at all levels of local government management. Participants not yet eligible for credentialing can join a class of up to 15 individuals to complete a series of five class modules and a team-based capstone project. All Leadership ICMA graduates receive one year of experience "credit" toward the ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program. For information, visit the Web site at icma.org/leadership.

Local Government Management Fellowship. This highly competitive career-development opportunity is designed to generate interest in local government careers among recent master's program graduates. Selected Fellows are placed in full-time management track local government positions, shaped by direct mentorship under senior government leaders and rotational assignments. ICMA is seeking hosts for current and future fellowships. Web site, icma.org/lgmf.

Emerging Leaders Development Program. Designed to help emerging leaders build contemporary man-agement skills, the Emerging Leaders Development Program provides a credentialed manager to serve as career coach for two years, and convenient teleseminars with Charldean Newell, editor of *The Effective Local Government Manager*, Robert Stripling, former manager of Staunton, Virginia, and other senior credentialed managers or public administration professors. Successful completion of the two-year program is celebrated with a special certificate. Web site, icma.org/eldp

Working Effectively with Others

Much of your success in your new position will depend on your ability to work with others. Here are some suggestions:

- Get to know the staff, and define your expectations.
- Establish goals and priorities, and develop a personal workplan.
- Clarify roles and boundaries.
- Understand the organization's and the community's politics.
- Learn the community issues, needs, and wants.
- In discussions, always try to avoid things becoming personal; stick to the professional issues at hand and be friendly and professional.
- If you are working for the manager, you can take several steps to build a healthy and productive relationship. It starts with communication. If possible, debrief regularly with the manager to discuss issues and strategies.
- Learn your manager's style. With some managers you need to be brief while others may appreciate a lot of analysis and discussion. Be prepared to make recommendations to the manager. Most managers will want to know your opinion and will accept your recommendation.
- If you are the manager, it is also important to build effective relationships with your staff, the council, and the community. Help them to understand your style so that they can better work with you.

Making Change in a New Organization

As you become more comfortable in the organization, you will be faced with making changes. We have faced many of these situations. In one city, department heads went directly to the manager when they should have gone to the assistant. In another city, many bureaucratic processes ran through the manager's office.

In both cases, we made necessary changes collaboratively, by talking with staff about the changes and involving staff in the change. We each tried to be consistent in our own behaviors to help make the changes easier for everyone involved. It is also important to assess later, after the change has been in effect for awhile, whether the change was positive or whether it still required additional action.

Settling In
While Keeping Balance

Changing jobs and possibly moving can be hard on you personally and on your family. As you go through the transition, it is important to succeed professionally, but it is even more important to ensure your own health and welfare as well as your family's.

Do not lose sight of work-life balance as you go through the transition. Find some activities outside of work that can help you manage stress and balance your life. Stay physically active. Make time for your family as you adjust to a new environment.

If your life is balanced, you will work better and you will be a better family member, and your efforts in both areas will be more sustained. You also will be a better role model for fellow employees, helping them sustain their professional and personal success.

Charlie Bush is city administrator, Prosser, Washington (cbush@cityofprosser.com); Tansy Hayward is assistant city manager, Tacoma, Washington (thayward@ci.tacoma.wa.us); and Noah Simon is director of community development, Forney, Texas (nsimon@cityofforney.org).

Volunteer Internships Benefit Local Governments and Students

by Robin Popik

Internships have been around for more than a decade, and numerous local governments have toyed with the idea of offering them but not as part of the community's volunteer program. Could it be that some volunteer managers just aren't sure how to sell the idea to local leaders, or maybe staff just aren't buying the concept?

Here are some tips to help you get an internship program started, along with some reasoning to help get your local officials on board with the idea.

Who Is the Intern?

The typical college student who scurries to find an internship opportunity has initiative, goals, and high expectations for the future. This student not only wants to build a résumé but also wants to see if college goals are a good match for them. The student sees an internship as a stepping-stone to bringing a career to life. That enthusiasm has a tendency to be contagious for those who work with the student.

Interns can be paid or nonpaid; and the individual could be working on a bachelor's degree or a master's degree, or could already be finished with these degrees. The basic premise of an internship is to take the organization or field of work out for a test drive. Depending on the level of the intern, the organization can also test drive the person for compatibility as a future employee.

How Do You Sell the Idea?

Government organizations that need temporary staff for special projects are a great place to use internships. Challenge the intern to bring out the value of the project. Don't shortchange the intern or your organization by providing only menial tasks to supplement the secretarial pool; if you do, you'll both be disappointed.

Interns want to learn and apply program theory and management to work flow. In local government, internships directly related to the student's area of study can be in numerous departments, including building inspections, environmental services, park planning, engineering, local government manager's office, and fire.

Practicum and cooperative education provide workplace settings in which students gain practical experience in a particular discipline, enhance skills, and integrate such knowledge as libraries, finance, or police. Internships offer the opportunity of better-trained employees while developing new talent in an employer's organization. Not only does an intern bring enthusiasm to the workplace, the person also brings up-to-date theories and business practices that relate to a specific field. Not to mention that internships are just point blank great recruitment and retention tools for any organization.

If the best public relations tool is an employee, then the second best is an intern. That individual is a great resource to educate the community about what happens within the local government organization. Local governments can champion this concept by using interns to teach about the governmental process and politics in a way most textbooks miss. The partnership between the educational institution and a government organization can also foster other community or training opportunities.

As the workforce continues to age, governments like all other organizations are looking for educated

individuals to fill needed positions. These internships bring to the forefront students who may otherwise not have come via the local government service route. Where better to teach students how their government runs or introduce them to politics?

Local governments have diversity in departments, from police to park planning and libraries to environmental services, where students can use their talents and explore a career in this public sector.

How Do You Start an Internship Program?

Start with what you know by reviewing your organization's existing job descriptions to determine the ones applicable to college interns. Next, talk to departments in the organization and collect their ideas for projects that an intern can do.

Write a job description for the internship and advertise it on your organization's Web site, on www.volunteermatch.com, or through an area volunteer center or local college. It's best to start with just one or two places. Another place to list your internships is on co-op and service learning Web sites.

You can also opt to post a generic job description that reads something like this: "College interns can volunteer throughout the year using their skills while they learn more about leadership. Our office would be happy to work with your college to find places for students in different departments. For more information, contact xyz."

Plano, Texas, advertises for college interns throughout the year and matches them as they contact the city. In the past year, interns were used in building inspections, engineering, park planning, environmental services, police, health department, Plano's television network, and parks and recreation. It's a surprise to see the projects that departments can organize once the staff knows a student is available and interested in their area.

Requests will usually be sent by e-mail. When students approach your program, review their interests to see if their skills and academic major fit one of your departments. You can request more information before actually meeting with a student and can suggest the individual visit your organization's Web site to find the department that best complements the student's field of study.

This past summer, Plano had 12 interns. Three interns worked for the police department, where they use interns all year long. The job descriptions were ready, and assignments were easy to make. The libraries are always willing to accept a student in a library science field of study, which they did this past summer.

In June, the health department made a special request for a student with a science or biology major to assist with a special research project. The other students were matched up by reviewing the answers to questions that were sent by e-mail, through a phone conversation with the volunteer manager and volunteer supervisor, and with an outline of requirements from their schools.

At first you might decide to stay with safe choices, such as office assistant, database development, Web site design, data entry and scanning, research projects, newsletter writing, or environmental specialists, but actually the possibilities are endless.

The length of the internship depends on the school and the number of credits the student requires. Service-learning requirements can start with as few as 15 hours, while credit internships can extend as long as 360 hours. This information should be discussed up front with the student and the department director, so they both know what's expected and can plan ahead.

The school or student should share the course description, course focus, and course competencies with the volunteer supervisor. Here's an example:

Course description. Career-related activities encountered in the student's area of specialization offered through an individualized agreement among the college, employer, and student. Under the supervision of the college and the employer, the student combines classroom learning with work experience.

Course focus. Work experience should:

A. Add a unique dimension to classroom instruction through on-the-job experience and training.

B. Test career aptitude and interest against practical job requirements before graduation.

C. Develop self-confidence, maturity, professional skills, and an understanding of human relations.

D. Help gain a professional contact that may be used as a reference for after-graduation employment.

Course competencies.

A. Improve interpersonal skills in class and on the job.

B. Work as a team member to accomplish the employer's goals.

C. Meet with members of your work group to identify problems that need to be addressed.

The final grade will be determined by criteria established by the student's college. However, here is an example of possible criteria:

Course work percentage.

Contact information: 5%
Daily log: 10%
Supervisor evaluation: 15%
Book review: 30%
Quizzes: 15%
Discussions:. 25%
Total percentage: **100%**

The volunteer manager completes the course agreement form, establishes learning objectives with the student and the instructor or coordinator, evaluates the learning objectives to decide whether they were completed in a satisfactory manner, and completes an evaluation form.

The student is under the direct or close supervision of a qualified college faculty member who will provide the local government with the necessary paperwork. Steps to supervise an intern are similar to supervising an employee or volunteer: orientation, training, guidance, and review of the student's activities.

The additional supervision might include sending e-mails to the college faculty to understand what is expected of the student and completing mid-session and end-of-session evaluations.

College academics are just one part of preparing for a future career. New graduates' résumés need to offer something extra to prospective employers, and that's where an internship is helpful. An internship also helps students gain hands-on experience and shows employers they have taken extra steps to learn more about their career choices.

Best of all, internships introduce supervisors to their next generation of employees.

Robin Popik is volunteer resources group supervisor, Plano, Texas (robinp@plano.gov).

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A Blueprint for Building the Leadership Pipeline

by Theodore Voorhees, Stacey Poston, and Vickie Atkinson

T he cascading impact that retirements have on leadership succession, the rising expectations among employees for development opportunities, and the need for increased leadership competencies at all levels of organizations are just some of the management challenges looming in the decade ahead. So where do you start to handle these challenges? Are better recruitment strategies the answer? Perhaps. But maybe the picture is not as bleak as it first appears, and you have more to work with than you realize.

When a team of Durham, North Carolina, city employees began drafting a "blueprint" to build the city's leadership pipeline, the team was pleased to learn of the many opportunities for development already in place within the organization. The creation of Durham's blueprint takes an integrated approach to professional growth and is helping team members describe the opportunities available, connecting existing employees with development options, and launching initiatives to close gaps and create new opportunities for leadership development.

Two years ago, in the September 2005 issue of *PM*, Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman presented "If I Pass the Baton, Who Will Grab It?" Since then, ICMA, state associations, and local governments have devoted time and energy to the succession-planning question. Much of the focus has been on how to attract the Next Generation ("Next Gen") talent to the profession of local government management.

Although recruitment is indeed an important part of human resource management, Lancaster and Stillman suggest in their subtitle that "creating bench strength" is a viable strategy, and they offer several value propositions that must be understood and addressed in order to create the kind of workplace and organization that will appeal to staff in both Generation X and the Millennial Generation. Additional insight may be gained by referring to "A Gathering Storm: Succession Planning in the Public Sector," released in June 2007 and available on the ICMA Web site, Next Generation, at icma.org/nextgen.

Durham's blueprint shows employees how they can take charge of their own careers and professional development, and it gives management a practical tool for building the leadership pipeline necessary to develop a workforce for the years ahead.

Inception and Result

A team of five employees[1] from different departments in Durham, with a charge from the city manager, chose a project to identify resources for leadership development. They understood that leadership development is paramount in the face of upcoming retirements of top-level managers and is important to retention and recruitment. Creating a plan or blueprint and initiating an informal mentoring pilot were chosen as the goals. This project is built upon "Leadership at All Levels," a core value of Durham's workforce.

Durham's Blueprint for the Leadership Pipeline can be found on the city's Web site at www.durhamnc.gov/departments/manager/blueprint. Copies also are distributed to employees without intranet access.

The blueprint document is divided into seven major sections:

- Engaging leaders at all levels.

- Getting people in the right places.

- Development programs and training.

City College

Description: This program focuses on employees understanding Durham's products and services, developing networking skills, and preparing them to be ambassadors for the city:

- Learning about the city organization.
- Making connections with people in other departments.
- Familiarity with all city departments and services.
- Visits to city operations sites.
- Department employment opportunities and requirements.

Target audience: Frontline employees through department directors. Time frame: One day per month (5 months).

Faculty and format: Faculty includes directors, assistant directors, and managers from within various city departments. Content is delivered through a variety of methods, including presentations, discussions, and tours.

Primary lead partner: Organizational development, city manager's office.

What's happening now and what's needed? Two City Colleges are held each year, with approximately 20 participants in each session.

The first annual alumni event was held in 2006. This event brought graduates from all City Colleges together to build new relationships across departments, provide departmental updates, and enhance skills as ambassadors.

This is an extremely successful program that is strongly supported by the city manager. All employees are encouraged to place their names on the waiting list and supervisors are urged by the manager's office to support participation.

For additional information and to contribute ideas and energy, contact Vickie Atkinson, 919/560-4222, extension 225; vickie.atkinson@durhamnc.gov.

- Getting the right experience.
- Owning your own development.
- Supplementing the pipeline.
- Strategic talent management.

Within the sections, a description of each program is provided, followed by the target audience and the typical time frame. The format tells how a class is taught or a function carried out. The primary lead partner identifies who is responsible or seems most likely to sponsor an initiative. What's happening now and what's needed gives an overview of current efforts and missing pieces of the pipeline.

Sections conclude with contact information and the invitation to contribute ideas and energy. Employees are encouraged to get involved in helping to build out incomplete pieces of the pipeline. Here are examples of programs from each section.

City College. City College—a cross-departmental orientation program—is designed to familiarize employees with services and to prepare them to be ambassadors for the city. It is similar to programs that educate citizens about the community. Street cleaners and department directors learn side by side in these sessions. Tours of water plants, demonstrations of equipment, and interactive activities are a part of the training.

Another explicit goal of City College is to inform employees of career options in other departments. So, in addition to preparing employees to represent the city, the city is attempting to prevent talented employees from leaving. Durham's managers believe that turnover can be reduced by providing employees with information on new and challenging opportunities in other departments, sometimes in surprising places.

Building on strengths. Durham's approach focuses on identifying and using the different strengths that employees bring to the workplace in order to create high levels of engagement. Research by the Gallup Organization demonstrates that people who use their strengths nearly every day at work are much more likely to be and remain engaged employees. According to Gallup, engaged employees "work with passion and feel a profound connection with their company. They drive innovation and move the organization forward."[2]

Strengths assessment is a regular feature of Durham's leadership training, and it is beginning to be used with existing teams. A recent session with the public works survey team identified an employee with a pattern of strengths ideal for training new employees. This individual is excited by the prospect of adding training to his role. The city's goal is to use strengths assessments to help employees find the op-

portunities and places in the organization where they can be most successful.

Management Academy. The Management Academy was created with succession planning in mind, and it shows the city's commitment to the training and development of emerging leaders. Because the city's goal is to promote from inside the organization whenever possible, leaders must prepare to assume higher-level positions.

Management Academy participants are drawn from the middle tier of the organization— supervisors and employees with broad responsibilities in the organization or in key relationships with the community. They participate in project teams with employees from other departments, develop relationships across the organization, increase their self-awareness, and expand their leadership and influencing skills.

Executive Leadership Institute. The Executive Leadership Institute is designed to provide training and development to the highest tier of current managers. The program is based on the Center for Creative Leadership's Developing Successful Executives, and it includes lectures, self assessment, multi-rater feedback, team projects, and executive coaching.

In an effort to deal with competing priorities and limited funding, staff members continually seek creative ways to build this capacity by using internal employees and opportunities. Leadership training is centered on action-learning projects. These projects put theory into immediate applied learning.

There are multiple benefits to this approach. Employees experience themselves leading positive changes and feeling empowered to make a difference. Organizational alignment and cross-departmental relationships are strengthened by sharing methods, working on problems for shared outcomes, and using organizational values to stay on track—thus moving from the perspective of the departmental silo to the broader organizational vision, mission, and values.

For those who anticipate organizational resistance to this approach, another benefit is that things get done that might not otherwise happen. Managers are encouraged to nominate projects for consideration by the project teams. Some teams have chosen specific components of the blueprint to build out their projects, thus expanding Durham's capacity for development.

Developmental assignments. Developmental assignments allow employees to experience a temporary job in another department. Typical assignments last for a few months. The "lending department" continues to pay the employee's salary as it would for any other development opportunity. Unfortunately, some interested employees do not have the chance to participate

because of budget constraints.

Sometimes, however, when an employee is lent to a developmental assignment, it creates an opportunity in the lending department for another employee to cover the temporarily absent employee's duties through a similar stretch or developmental assignment within the department—a kind of domino effect. Still in the concept phase is a plan to find resources to expand this program by hiring temporary employees to fill the gap left by the lent employee.

Developmental assignments have multiple benefits. Employees expand their skill sets and experience new employment possibilities, while departments benefit from fresh perspectives and employees with broader knowledge. The organization benefits from more knowledgeable employees with an allegiance to the entire organization. This program has the dual benefit of developing employees by placing them outside of their current positions and by exposing them to promotional opportunities in other parts of local government administration.

Durham officials hope that more employees will remain as city staff as they realize opportunities for professional development or advancement within the broader organization.

Informal mentoring pilot (under construction). Informal mentoring develops as a natural person-to-person match as opposed to formal mentoring programs that match mentor and mentee and oversee their interactions. Research has shown that informal mentoring is more successful than formal mentoring programs.

Informal mentoring is generally done in one-on-one meetings in casual settings, sometimes over lunch or dinner. There are no requirements about how often the pair meets or for how long. The mentor shares opinions, offers advice on decisions, and makes frequent suggestions for career development.

To pilot the informal mentoring plan, employees who had already shown their interest in development were invited to join; they were identified through their participation in one of the sessions of the Executive Leadership Institute, Management Academy, or City College. A get-acquainted session was held (it was based on the speed-dating concept), and it allowed mentors and mentees to self-select on the basis of their similar responses. Quarterly follow-up meetings are held to support the participants, and the staff will evaluate the initiative after one year.

35 under 35 network (in design phase). Focusing on the blueprint helped the staff see some of the places where more work is needed. When staff members discovered the Web site www.youngfeds.org, they realized the city needed something like "35 under

35" to create special opportunities for networking and development for young professionals to increase and support their interest in local government. In the future, a city group of under-35s will decide what they most want and need to support their professional development. How to support young professionals in creating their own program is currently being explored.

Internship program and retiree employment program. Looking toward both ends of the spectrum, the city realizes that it needs to focus on getting students interested in employment with Durham. A look at ways to entice retirees to consider part-time employment is also needed. The city is definitely organizing and expanding efforts to attract interns to its placements.

The staff also needs to share and coordinate efforts with the entire organization on what individual departments have under way to engage retirees in part-time work. Further, because this community is a high growth area for retirees and second-career professionals, we need to look into how we can take advantage of a broader retiree base.

Learning Advisory Board. The Learning Advisory Board currently makes recommendations about who is admitted to various training programs when demand exceeds supply. The goal is to expand the board's responsibilities to more strategic functions, including

data-driven measurement of results from the blueprint. We also want to strengthen the board's role in recommending pipeline-building priorities as they culminate in developing our staff to meet the challenges of 21st-century communities.

A Blueprint of Your Own

Development is more than training. There probably are opportunities you can take advantage of right now, including informal mentoring, projects that can provide learning as well as organizational benefits, short-term job exchanges that can serve developmental purposes, and other situations that can foster learning.

Taking an inventory of what you already have is a great place to start, and it can help create your organization's own blueprint to build a leadership pipeline.

Notes

1 Vickie Atkinson, city manager's office; Kevin Easter, community development; Tyran Fennell, human resources; Stacey Poston, general services; and Ruben Wall, parks and recreation.

2 *Gallup Management Journal*, January 12, 2006.

Theodore Voorhees, ICMA-CM, is deputy city manager, Durham, North Carolina (theodore.voorhees@ durhamnc.gov); Stacey Poston is acting ADA coordinator, Durham (stacey.poston@durhamnc.gov); and Vickie Atkinson is manager of organizational development, Durham (vickie.atkinson@durhamnc.gov).

Sabbaticals Really Are Special

by Craig Smith

Ever want to take a break from your daily routine? Learn something new or get to know other employees in your organization? Want to have the time to help someone else? According to the Merriam-Webster's dictionary, the definition of sabbatical is a break or change from a normal routine. Winchester, Virginia, decided to offer its employees such an opportunity in order to reduce or avoid job burnout; create new networks so they could learn more about themselves, their coworkers, and city operations; and return to their regular jobs rejuvenated from the experience.

Winchester created the Internal Sabbatical Program in 2004, and the six-month internship is open to all employees who are looking for a change of pace and want to learn something new about government administration. Interested employees are required to submit an essay detailing why they want to participate and the benefits they believe this opportunity will provide.

To be eligible, employees applying for the internship must have at least a high school diploma or GED, be employed by the city for at least one year, and be computer literate.

The First Sabbatical

When the inaugural program was introduced, many applications were received from the city's 450-employee workforce. Two employees chosen for the first sabbatical were Tracy Carpenter, family services social worker, Winchester Social Services Department, and me, then an investigator with the Winchester Police Department.

Tracy was a model social worker. She showed compassion toward her clients, tried to provide everyone with the help they needed, and cared enough about their well-being to go out of her way to provide as-

sistance. She was also tired, stressed, and left the office each day with a heavy heart. Tracy decided to apply for the sabbatical internship because she hoped to "come back refreshed and ready to devote all my energy to my clients."

Tracy interned with the city's administration department, where she participated in all aspects of the human resources and daily administration of local government. She assisted the human resources manager with interviews, ran background checks, called references, completed interviews for positions ranging from department heads to line workers, and made hiring recommendations.

She also helped administration personnel with employee and public inquiries. Other projects included conducting salary surveys for other Virginia jurisdictions as well as for Winchester; coordinating the social services director survey to see what the community thought of the department and what type of person the city should hire; organizing and implementing the employee training program; helping with benefits open enrollment; and assisting with the coordination of the employee recognition breakfast.

Winchester strongly believes that an educated, experienced workforce is the heart of quality customer service, and that knowledgeable, well-rounded employees make for a better city. That's why this sabbatical opportunity was created, in addition to its training program. Designed to offer employees the opportunity to broaden their knowledge about the city, it also improves customer relations, reduces turnover, and helps employees understand they are important and appreciated.

My Experience

I had been employed by the Winchester Police Department for 12 years when I decided to apply for the city's

internship program to gain a better understanding of local government in action. At the time, I thought all government business somehow was related to law enforcement activities.

After completion of my six-month sabbatical internship with the city manager's office, however, I was amazed at the complexity and depth of managing such a large organization, which is tasked with a wide variety of responsibilities and functions.

My experience highlights the very purpose of the sabbatical internship program, which is that city employees gain a better understanding of the scope of services and number of personnel required to provide services to the community. In addition to my experiences with the city manager, I worked with personnel in the fire and rescue department to research, present, and implement an emergency medical service (EMS) fee for transport. This program provided additional revenue for the fire and rescue department through a fee paid mostly by insurance carriers.

I enjoyed the experience of researching a particular project, presenting the findings to the council, and then participating in a council-appointed committee to study the project. This type of experience gives internship participants an overall view of how ideas become policy and then programs. In fact, I enjoyed my sabbatical so much that my internship was extended another six months so I could continue the work I started. And the internship ultimately led to my seeking the assistant city manager position and to where I am today.

Mentoring as Professional Development

Serving as a mentor can fulfill a portion of the professional development requirement for voluntary credentialing. Members can create a professional development plan that includes mentoring as an activity.

Members receive much more than just credit for mentoring; members also learn a great deal from the experience. An open and two-way exchange of ideas between those who are experienced and those who are looking at this field with a fresh lens provides a new avenue of learning.

As you build your development plan, as part of the credentialing requirements, consider including work as a mentor.

—Susan Arntz, city manager, Waconia, Minnesota (sarntz@waconia.org)

Make a Difference

Walter Turkowsky, supervisor at the Winchester Department of Social Services, also participated as the affordable housing assistant. A former police officer, experienced social worker, and dedicated community volunteer, Walter was the perfect choice to work with Winchester's Inspections Department on a new rental housing program.

As a social worker and Winchester resident, Turkowsky was concerned about the city's growing homeless population. "I would often see people coming into social services saying they had no place to live; the Salvation Army is full; and they do not have the means available to rent or purchase a house," he said. "I chose to do this internship because I wanted to get involved and help the city tackle this problem head on."

While working with the inspections department for a month, he helped the housing inspectors inspect rental apartments and houses to ensure the structures were up to code so the tenants could have a respectable and livable place to call home. He also reported to the economic development office to begin working on Winchester's affordable housing initiative.

Another goal of the internship program, in addition to providing employees a break from their daily routine, is to place knowledgeable and dedicated employees in a different department, where they can make a difference. The internship has and will in the future benefit the chosen department and intern, because adding a new and different perspective to the way problems and projects should be addressed is an asset that cannot be matched.

The trend in local government in the recent past has been to shrink or flatten the organization in an attempt to become more efficient, responsive, and effective. While this trend has many positive points, it also leaves the organization searching for the next group of leaders, department heads, executive officers, and supervisors.

In an effort to fill vital positions, Winchester has undertaken an extensive program to develop current employees and devote resources to training rather than to external searches. Through the sabbatical internship program, Winchester has devoted significant resources to the development and cultivation of its current workforce to ensure quality leadership in the future.

Craig Smith is assistant city manager, Winchester, Virginia (csmith@ci.winchester.va.us).

Winchester EXCELLs

by Elizabeth Guiliano

In 2000, Ed Daley, who was then the city manager of Winchester, Virginia, organized a brainstorming session with trusted colleagues. Daley had two goals in mind: (1) figure out how to implement a supervisory training program, and (2) improve interdepartmental cross-communication. Today, seven years later, the city is in its sixth iteration of its successful program known as the EXCELL (**EX**ecutive **C**ity **E**mployee **L**earning and **L**eadership) Academy.

Background Story

In the past, when a supervisory position in Winchester opened, the usual practice was to promote the best worker from within the ranks. Director of Administration Sharen Gromling remembers that this process sometimes had the unfortunate result of setting people up for failure.

New supervisors were being asked to make decisions they were not equipped to handle. The city undertook special employee training to rectify the situation, but city management did not think that these initiatives sufficiently addressed the skill set needed by the new supervisors.

Also, as Winchester continued to grow, city departments had begun working more independently, resulting in diminished communication among employees. Management staff argued that the city would be much more efficient and could better serve its constituents if issues could be handled by going directly across channels to the right person rather than passing information up, over, and down to that same appropriate person. Finding a way to enhance employee communication was an issue that the staff wanted to resolve.

These two topics were of central concern when staff sat down with others to discuss possible solutions. At the table was Jim Guiliano, a professor of management at Lord Fairfax Community College (LFCC). He suggested that a cost-effective way of addressing the city's supervisory needs was for the city to partner with LFCC, which serves seven counties and the city of Winchester, in developing a training program. That proved to be a key suggestion in making the program a reality.

The Program

After some serious discussion about what specific areas of training the participants in this new program would need, the team determined that a two-pronged approach would work best to address all concerns. Participants in the year-long program would be asked to take a series of three, three-credit courses through LFCC and would also participate in monthly in-house training facilitated by city department heads, with some outside guest speakers included.

LFCC agreed to provide a section of the desired courses specifically for the city of Winchester cohort. Over the years, the courses have usually been held at facilities in Winchester provided by the city, but some, because of technology needs, have been held at LFCC's Middletown campus. The college provides a computer course, Introduction to Computer Applications and Concepts, which emphasizes such Microsoft software programs as Word, Excel, and PowerPoint that are used by city employees.

It also provides a communications course, Writing for Business, to improve or refine the writing and speaking skills used in the workplace. A business course, Principles of Supervision, is offered specifically to address the issues of being a supervisor, such

Town and Gown Partners

There are various ways that local governments can cooperate with local universities and colleges for the mutual benefit of each. Asheville, North Carolina, found a unique way to partner with a university to benefit employees and the University.

Western Carolina University (WCU) is located more than 60 miles away from the city and offers a Master of Public Affairs (MPA) program to its graduate students. Since a number of its students live in Asheville, WCU was looking for classroom space in the area that would provide a more convenient location.

After city staff met with the dean of the graduate school and the chair of the MPA program, Asheville began a cooperative effort in 2001, and it is still in place today. The city provides classroom space in a municipal building for the MPA program. This offers working, adult students a chance to pursue their MPA in a classroom located near where they live and work.

In return, WCU offers two local government fellowships for two Asheville employees to pursue their MPA. The fellowship covers the cost of tuition and related expenses. WCU also allows transfer credits to employees who have attended certain management courses in the city's internal supervisory and management training program, which is Asheville's corporate university program. Both the trainer and course must be pre-approved by WCU to be eligible for the transfer credits.

Through this approach with WCU, more than a dozen city employees have used the fellowships as a step toward achieving their MPA degree. The level of training provided by the program has been beneficial to the city. It has provided it with a more educated staff and a larger than normal number of professional division and department-level managers.

—Jim Westbrook, Vass, North Carolina, and Retired Manager, Asheville, North Carolina

as making decisions, handling evaluations, monitoring productivity, and enhancing employee and supervisor performance.

The in-house training facilitated by various department heads was established primarily as a way to get participants to know each other and to witness the various functions the city and their fellow employees perform. Field trips to city facilities like the regional jail and the water treatment plant give the cohort a better understanding of this multifaceted organization. A service-oriented group project, such as participating in the United Way's Day of Caring, allows the participants to interact while giving back to their community. Guest speakers from outside the city have also been used to enhance training with both serious and light-hearted topics.

Implementation

Any program with integrity does not happen overnight, and this is true of the EXCELL Academy too. Gromling and Anne Lewis, Winchester's current assistant city manager and EXCELL Academy graduate, were ultimately responsible for the program's implementation, which took approximately one year from concept to reality.

Winchester's management staff needed to gain approval from the city council for expenditures for the program—tuition at LFCC, textbooks, and some overtime pay for covering shifts in the departments that operate around the clock—and councilmembers were supportive of the initiative. Management staff then requested that department heads and team leaders nominate potential candidates for the program. Each cohort consists of approximately 22 to 25 motivated and recommended employees from a variety of departments.

Lewis argues that the scheduling is the most time-consuming aspect of the program's implementation. Trying to find common time to get this varied group of approximately 25 together, especially when taking into consideration that several departments provide 24/7 coverage, proves to be problematic. Fortunately, because the college class sections have been designated for only EXCELL participants, the faculty have been able to coordinate available times in their schedules with times that work for the cohort.

Results

The response to the program from the first group was positive, so, with minor changes, the next group was created. Feedback from the original participants and the LFCC faculty members prompted a change in the order of classes.

The resulting order, which has been maintained since, is to offer the computer course first so that students can make use of the word processing and PowerPoint skills in the other courses. The writing course is now offered second in order to hone writing and speaking skills in preparation for the case studies and role-playing activities that are key elements of the supervision course.

Participants have also spoken positively about their experiences with the program. An employee in the human resources department at the time she was a participant, Lewis appreciates that as a result of the EXCELL Academy, her fellow participants learned to better understand the HR function in the city and why some policies need to be the way they are.

And, even with a college degree, she soon recognized that there were still things for her to learn. The rewards, to her, are so much more than the grades. Frank Wright, chief of fire and rescue and an EXCELL Academy graduate, indicates that one of the most important things he gained as a participant was a new perspective from which to view procedure, and that perspective has led to actual changes in his department's procedures.

Department heads and the management staff appreciate both the tangible and intangible benefits of the program. Wright, as a department head, sees that graduates are better able to communicate and that they generate better reports, which he views as essential skills. Lewis cites one participant's experience as being particularly rewarding because the employee was so appreciative that his supervisor thought enough of him to nominate him for the program. The change in confidence levels that graduates possess has been noted by all those interviewed. Their personal pride is also clearly evident as they receive their certificates at EXCELL Academy graduation.

Changing Roles

Lewis indicates that since the program has been established, her role in implementing each iteration has changed. The time-consuming part is still in the recruiting and scheduling, but not for the same reasons. She now has to spend her time narrowing down the list of applicants because of increased interest among department heads and employees.

The role of the program itself has actually changed, too, because of its success. Instead of being a recommended training option, it is now a part of each employee's career development plan and a required element of the internal promotion policy.

Costs

There are costs involved in running such a program. The primary tangible costs for implementing it include the participants' tuition and textbooks; however, community college tuition is less costly than other alternatives might be. Also, some overtime expenses are incurred by departments that work around the clock.

When participants cannot be on duty because of EXCELL classes or in-service sessions, another department member must be paid to provide coverage. Outside speakers are sometimes paid, but frequently they volunteer or their honorarium is covered by grants or private donations.

While not insurmountable, there are also intangible costs to deal with. The one noted by participants and the administration alike is time. Before starting the program, the members must be aware of the outlay of time expected of them—being in class, doing homework, participating in team-building community service, and keeping up with work responsibilities.

Wright acknowledges that participation requires dedication on the part of cohort members. In addition, department heads and team leaders must be aware of the burden they take on when they agree to have an employee out of the office and participating in the EXCELL Academy. Gromling notes that supervisors have come to focus less on time out of the office and more on the many long-term benefits the program instills in the participants.

Benefits

Just as the costs are frequently intangible, so are the benefits. Of the employees and department heads he has spoken to, Councilmember Tim Coyne has been impressed with their positive feedback about the program. Personal growth and strengthened job skills are two benefits that have been mentioned to him repeatedly since the program's inception.

For some, the nine credits earned are the impetus for pursuing further study and college degrees. Winchester Mayor Elizabeth Minor believes that the learning experiences the program provides help with the retention of employees. Participants have expressed appreciation for the support from the city, and similarly Lewis sees a level of energy in employees that was not there before.

The relationship building that administrators hoped for has been successful and has grown. Participants now feel comfortable on a typical workday if they have to pick up the phone to question or request assistance from someone they met through the program.

Beyond the hoped-for work relationships and performance, a kickball tournament started by the EXCELL Academy as a community service fund-raising project has become an annual event; it includes both city employees and council members. Lewis says that opportunities such as this are not just coffee klatches; they represent chances for meaningful interaction that might not have otherwise occurred.

Elizabeth Guiliano, D.A., is a professor of English, Lord Fairfax Community College (bguiliano@ifcc.edu), Middletown, Virginia, and an EXCELL Academy instructor.

New and Valuable: University Partnerships

by P. Michael Paules

City and county managers have heard the warning: there aren't enough well-trained local government management professionals ready to take over leadership roles when existing managers retire. Why is this occurring? Some would say it's just a demographic phenomenon as baby boomers retire and are followed by Generations X and Y, whose members place greater value on multitasking, independence, and short-term rewards than their predecessors, whose guiding principles have centered on progressive social change.

But the impending leadership crisis may be more the doing of the retiring generation itself than any particular demographic trend. Budget cutting and organizational streamlining have reduced the number of generalist management positions in many organizations. Important rungs of the career ladder have been removed from organizational charts as generalist positions have been replaced by technical specialists.

Managers reporting to top executives are frequently given extensive line responsibilities, preventing them from developing generalist management skills and an organization-wide perspective. Jobs that once occupied the on-deck circle for promotions to executive leadership posts have been lost.

Compounding this problem is the relative obscurity in which city and county management professionals work. In today's media-dominated society, little attention is paid to public managers unless things go extremely wrong; then, in assigning blame, citizens find it difficult to distinguish between politicians and administrators, which leads to growing disenchantment.

Today, fewer candidates are prepared to pursue a senior management career track than did so a generation ago.[1] And for those who do enter this track, some of the best and brightest candidates actually feel that the risks and responsibilities of executive management outweigh the rewards.

What Steps Are Needed?

If the soon-to-retire generation of public managers shares some responsibility for the impending leadership void, what steps can they take to help fill the pipeline with capable and energetic individuals ready to take up the challenge of local government management in the 21st century? A unique collaboration between management practitioners and the School of Policy, Planning, and Development (SPPD) at the University of Southern California (USC) offers a model of collaboration and innovation in developing talent in the field of local government leadership.

The public administration program at USC was established in 1929 by a group of suburban city managers and administrators in Los Angeles city and county governments to meet the demands of the growing Los Angeles region,[2] and it has consistently been one of the top-ranked programs in the nation. Now the university and city management community have come full circle by reinventing the partnership that has served both interests so well for the past 60 years.

Last year, Cal-ICMA—California's ICMA affiliate—proposed the creation of a pilot program with USC in which ICMA members and university representatives would work together to provide academic training, professional development, and financial support for graduate students committed to local government management.

Bill Kelly, city manager of Arcadia, California, and members of the Cal-ICMA Next Generation Committee began a series of meetings with SPPD Dean Jack Knott and members of the university's financial aid staff, which led to the establishment of the master of public administration (MPA) City/County Management Fellowship Program (CCMFP).

CCMFP provides each member of a small group of graduate students who are pursuing MPA degrees with an annual $12,000 scholarship funded by the university as well as an extensive array of networking opportunities with local government professionals, including internships, mentoring opportunities, and attendance at ICMA and other local government conferences.

The program structure is established by a memorandum of understanding between the university and Cal-ICMA. An advisory council, consisting of 11 city managers and university representatives, oversees implementation and spearheads initiatives to involve the greater public manager community. Managers who serve on the advisory council solicit funds, recommend criteria used in awarding the fellowships, and facilitate participation by CCMFP Fellows in local government professional organizations.

In 2007, seven scholarships were provided, and it is anticipated that next year the number of scholarships will grow to 11. Selection is competitive and is based on academic achievements and commitment to the local government management field. The university determines the number and selection of the fellowship recipients with input from the advisory council.

Additional financial support for the CCMFP has been provided by the California City Management Foundation, which contributed $5,000 to professional development activities for participants, including subsidized attendance at ICMA and regional professional conferences. In the coming year, the advisory council plans to contact public management practitioners, particularly SPPD alumni, to invite their involvement through financial support or other activities such as providing internships and offering mentoring to CCMFP fellows.

Spin-offs

A number of spin-off opportunities have resulted from the USC and Cal-ICMA collaboration. Two city managers from the CCMFP advisory council have recently been appointed to the university's MPA advisory board. There are also ongoing discussions with the university about adding practicing city management professionals to SPPD's adjunct faculty roster. The success of the CCMFP pilot program and the interest and involvement of local city and county managers will determine Cal-ICMA's development of future partnerships with other universities.

Mark Alexander, city manager of La Canada-Flintridge, California, and vice president of the CCMFP advisory council, recently summarized the program's goals, stating "The USC City/County Management Fellowship Program pioneers a new opportunity for local governments and higher education to work together to develop the next generation of managers."[3]

Support from the university has also been nothing short of enthusiastic. Dr. Shui Yan Tang, USC's MPA program director, put it this way: "Preparing our students to be leaders in local government has long been a key mission of the MPA program at USC. The new City/County Management Fellowship signifies our continual commitment to this mission. We look forward to working with Cal-ICMA and our alumni in making the fellowship a success."[4]

In these times when shifting politics, job stress, and bad publicity are causing managers to reassess their professional goals, there may be no better way to rekindle the passion for public service than to reach out to the next generation of local government leaders. Sharing time and experience with young professionals through programs like the California City/County Management Fellowship Program provides managers with an opportunity to give back to the profession and invest in the future of local government.

The retirement clock is ticking, so the time to begin this process is now. The opportunities are limited only by the commitment that ICMA members bring to the task.

1 Ralph Blumenthal, "Unfilled City Manager Posts Hint at Future Gap," *New York Times* (January 11, 2007).

2 Frank P. Sherwood, "The Education and Training of Public Managers," in *The Handbook of Organization Management*, ed. William B. Eddy (New York: M. Dekker, 1983), 43.

3 Carl Alameda and John Keisler, "USC to Offer 2007 City/County Management Fellowship Program, *Los Angeles Metro Area ASPA Update* (Spring 2007): 3, 7.

4 Ibid., 7.

P. Michael Paules, ICMA-CM, is city manager, San Gabriel, California (Mpaules@sgch.org).

The Myths and Realities of Succession Planning

by Patrick Ibarra

One has only to pick up a magazine or newspaper, glance at a TV, pull up a favorite Web site, or attend another in a seemingly endless series of retirement parties to realize the workforce is aging and, as a result, new challenges are upcoming. We have all heard about the baby-boom generation and the staggering numbers of boomers who will be hitting the retirement rolls.

Some people assert that the boomers will act differently from prior generations and not necessarily enter into retirement in the old-fashioned sense, but instead will want to remain active and work beyond what is or was considered a normal retirement age. In 2007 this is merely an assertion and is risky to presume because society is just now entering this phase, and the evidence is insufficient to support this as a trend. Organizations should not count on employees continuing to work even after reaching normal retirement age as a means of ensuring full staffing.

In the public sector, the effect of an aging workforce is even more troubling than in the private sector. More than 46 percent of local government employees nationwide are 45 years of age and older, but in the private sector only 31 percent are 45 years of age and older.

The age of 45 is not necessarily old by any stretch of the imagination, but there are as many varied retirement systems as there are states in the union. In some states and for some retirement systems, such as California's, 45 is approaching retirement age. In the public sector, 30 percent of state government employees nationwide are eligible for retirement in 2006, and by 2008 more than 50 percent of federal government employees will be eligible for retirement.

Furthermore, in some public sector retirement systems, employees have a clear incentive to retire as they reach a cap on their retirement income. In fact, if an employee continues to work, at some point that employee will earn just cents on the dollar.

The unprecedented demands being placed on public sector organizations along with the pending brain drain place these organizations at a critical juncture: the need for experienced and seasoned professional staff members has never been greater while the trend shows that personnel who are near retirement age are the most likely to be departing the organization in the near future.

Many progressive organizations are pursuing comprehensive and systematic succession planning to ensure that the organizations are able to lose seasoned, knowledgeable employees without disrupting service delivery. More than simply training younger employees, succession planning is about developing talent inside the organization as well as recruiting additional qualified candidates to join the staff.

Most government organizations are chock-full of an assortment of plans—budgets, capital improvements, public facilities, information technology, public safety, utility improvements, thoroughfares, land use, and so forth. What's often missing is a clear strategy about how to develop each employee's capabilities so that each of these plans is implemented on time and as intended.

In other words, the most important ingredients—the skills and knowledge of the employees charged with implementing the plans—are often missing. Frequently so much attention is paid to resources that are more definable, including equipment, finances, geography, and the like, that what's overlooked is how employees will need to grow and develop to make sure these plans hit their mark. Translated, this means: Where are these organizations' succession plans?

In an attempt to set the story straight about succession planning, what it is and what it is not, and

how it works and how it benefits those organizations that pursue it, we look at the following 10 myths and realities.

Myth 1. In government, we can't preselect candidates; neither can we guarantee anyone a job or promotion.

Reality: A comprehensive and systematic succession planning and management (SPM) program is designed to be the most merit-based selection system an organization could ever use. If used effectively, SPM is intended only to ensure that internal candidates can be competitive when promotional opportunities arise, and nothing more.

Myth 2. Our organization will simply rehire those employees who do retire, so we don't have to be concerned with succession planning.

Reality: In the best of worlds, this is a short-term strategy that may serve as a bridge and buy time needed to begin developing internal employees for future opportunities. This strategy sends a powerful message to internal employees that opportunities they thought might be available when long-term employees retire will not be there and that the organization is not particularly interested in their development.

Second—and this is the risky part—employees who do retire and are rehired can walk in any day and announce they are indeed retiring for good and do not intend to work at all, thus leaving the organization scrambling to find replacements.

Myth 3. Our organization is too small to put in place an SPM program. Besides, we're a relatively flat organization, and promotional opportunities don't come along often.

Reality: Both small and large organizations should pursue succession planning. Small organizations have issues particular to their size, such as few people in certain occupations and people wearing several hats. When one person in a small organization departs, that person may well also take away one, two, or more actual jobs.

Typical large organizations, in contrast, have several employees filling similar occupations, but their challenge is sheer volume: the number of employees departing will be extraordinarily high and might disrupt normal service delivery while replacements are sought.

Myth 4. Succession planning is just some new marketing gimmick that consultants have come up with to sell particular services.

Reality: Quite the contrary. The fact is that public sector organizations have been doing succession planning for years, but many didn't know what its official name was. Their method of succession planning has been simple replacement planning in which possible internal replacements are identified. This works only in organizations that are stable.

In police departments, for example, for years everyone knew that when a certain captain was promoted, a certain lieutenant would be in line to replace the captain. When the lieutenant was promoted, it was also known which sergeant would be in line for that position. This method functioned extremely well for a long time.

The situation now is that many of these captains, lieutenants, sergeants, and police officers are all about the same age, so that the traditional method of promotion cannot continue. It's not only in the police departments where this is happening; it's also in fire, public works, public utilities, health and human services, parks and recreation, and most other departments as well.

Comprehensive and systematic succession planning is not a gimmick. It provides organizations with a clear and actionable strategy to target their investments of time and money where they are most needed.

Myth 5. We heard there's succession planning software, so we'll buy our way out of this issue by installing the latest cutting-edge-technology software package.

Reality: Software is of course available, but its primary purpose is to warehouse employee data on positions they have held in the past and similar database capabilities. Indeed, implementing SPM is not as simple as installing a new software package and waiting for it to manage the process.

Similarly, succession planning does not have to be unreasonably burdensome. Most likely, it will be somewhere in the middle: an approach that's well-designed, repeatable, and practically oriented.

Myth 6. We've always found the "cream rises to the top" to be our best method of employee development.

Reality: This old-school approach should be discarded immediately, as its premise is that everyone in an organization is afforded the same opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute. The fact is that all too often an employee's ability to grow and learn is a function of who the employee's supervisor is and how much time, effort, and energy that supervisor chooses to invest in helping staff members along.

Unfortunately, the practice of supervisors and managers deciding to help their employees grow and prosper is not universal, and organizations suffer the consequence because some employees quit and leave while others quit and stay. In SPM, a large net is cast as part of an inclusive approach to employees; it advertises to employees: "opportunities for growth are available so let's sit down and chat about what this organization needs and how your growth can help meet those needs."

SPM is most definitely not the proverbial tail wagging the dog, allowing employees personal discretion about what they ultimately choose as their work while the organization gains nothing for its efforts. Instead, SPM is about the blending of employees' desires and interest with an organization's needs for improved service delivery; it results in give-and-take by both parties.

Myth 7. Implementing succession planning is too expensive and is a massive undertaking.

Reality: To design and implement a comprehensive and results-based SPM program is entirely affordable and can be accomplished if experienced and knowledgeable consulting services are obtained. Remember that SPM should be a repeatable process that allows for an extended shelf life. After obtaining external consulting assistance to help establish SPM, annual investments should not be necessary.

Myth 8. We'll simply deliver more employee training as our way of dealing with all retirements.

Reality: Ever wonder why training budgets are one of the first areas adversely affected when budget dollars become scarce? It is a typical response by organizations to an activity that is rarely evaluated for the type of impact it's having on employee performance. Evaluating the impact of training by adding up the number of hours employees spend in training is the equivalent of assessing the quality of an automobile by the size of its gas tank. What does one have to do with the other? Very little.

Simply training more employees is not the solution to the mass exodus of talent. For too long, many public sector organizations have invested the lion's share of their training budgets on technical or compliance training. Instead, more dollars should be invested in training employees in the so-called soft-skill areas. These soft skills—the ability to exercise good judgment, manage resources, and execute against goals and objectives—are what employers critically need to ensure the delivery of public services.

Employee development must also be a component of effective SPM. The following list shows a range of employee-development activities designed to help employees acquire perspective, exercise judgment, collaborate with others, and motivate team members, all not easily accomplished in a training class.

- Job assignments.
- On-the-job coaching.
- Higher-level meetings.
- Training sessions.
- Mentoring.
- Conference leader or instructor.
- Self-study.
- Job shadowing.
- Task force assignments.

Myth 9. Succession planning should be an initiative spearheaded by the human resources director.

Reality: This myth is code for department heads not having to participate; instead, department heads rely on the human resources director to handle the entire issue. For succession planning to reach the desired outcome, all members of the executive team must be involved. Instituting a robust SPM process can be the equivalent of a culture change and, as such, requires strong and visible leadership from the executive team to not only introduce SPM but ensure its success as well.

Myth 10. We'll use some other agency's SPM process and adopt it as ours.

Reality: Although most, if not all, organizations will experience the trend of people departing in high numbers, and similar responses to it do exist, unique organizational-contextual issues must be factored in. Simply transplanting another agency's SPM process into your organization may be efficient and inexpensive, but it's risky, too. For SPM to be truly effective, it must be customized to fit your organization's particular needs, and that cannot be accomplished by lifting a program from another agency and dropping it into your workplace.

In summary, designing and implementing a comprehensive and systematic succession planning and management process remains the most viable response to the growing trend of large numbers of employees retiring.

Patrick Ibarra (patrick@gettingbetterallthetime.com) is cofounder and partner, The Mejorando Group (www.gettingbetterallthetime.com), Phoenix, Arizona. He is a former city manager and human resources director.

Emerging Leaders: How to Begin Your Career in Local Government

by Andrea Costello and Courtney Kleinert

Each spring, thousands of college and graduate students begin looking for their first jobs and perhaps gaining their entry into careers in local government. They take such steps as networking with professors, perusing the ICMA or state-organization Web sites, and searching through many other online or published venues.

As a result of their searches for introductory positions, recent graduates begin the process of mailing applications, cover letters, and résumés to cities and counties across the country. For emerging leaders, the job-search process differs from the more advanced processes followed by current leaders who are ready for the next step in their careers.

The clearest difference between newcomers and these members with more longevity in the profession is that the emerging generation is not familiar with the environment and expectations of local-government job searching, and because of the lack of information available to them, the authors of this article wish to share what we have learned.

The word "we" is used loosely, as it also includes various professionals who have reviewed this article and offered their perspectives. As members of the profession, we all need to help newcomers understand the profession's culture and insights that they will need to succeed as local public servants.

Tip: As you read, you will see boldfaced tips that we have compiled from our personal experience as well as from the experience of more seasoned professionals.

Our main goal is to help direct new leadership candidates through the often-daunting, unfamiliar process of starting a career in local government. This article aims to alleviate some of the mystery by giving assistance and practical knowledge to emerging local government leaders. We will guide you through the process, not only of locating a good job posting but also of getting a job offer, by taking you through these six steps:

1. Setting individual priorities.
2. Searching for job listings.
3. Preparing for the interview.
4. Undergoing the interview process.
5. Handling negotiations.
6. Identifying one or more mentors.

Setting Individual Priorities

Priorities can change over the course of our lives, regardless of whether they are personal, career, or family-related, but defining your own personal and professional priorities for a job-related life change is crucial to a successful job search. One way you can begin thinking about your priorities is by taking every opportunity to explore the profession of local government.

If you have the option of interning with an organization while in college or graduate school, take advantage of it! Depending on the duties and responsibilities of the internship, this experience can be an excellent way to start developing criteria for your first position in local government, as well as identifying the types of positions that might interest you.

Tip: If you accept an internship, try to get the most out of it by learning about various areas within the organization, and participate in projects with different

departments so you can get exposure to a variety of government operations/departments.

As you start out in the profession of local government, often the most urgent priority is to earn a salary that will cover living expenses and student loans, as well as offer a level of comfort that you only dreamed of while in the stale comfort of a dorm room. For many first-time job seekers, the location of an available job may not be very important, but project responsibilities, access to professional development, and a competitive base-level salary are all critical considerations. While there are certainly a plethora of other personal priorities, these three criteria will shape your future ascent through the local-government career ladder.

One consideration in particular that we want to highlight is the need for continued professional development. At any level of public-service employment, it is essential that continued education and development occur. Local government may not be fast-paced, but laws and governing principles do change over time, as do management strategies and effective management principles. It is extremely important that an employer agree to give you chances for continued professional development, particularly through ICMA and other professional, state, and private organizations.

Whatever your personal and professional priorities may be, establishing them before applying for a job is beneficial, as some positions may be eliminated from your search if they do not meet your criteria. As you become a seasoned member of the profession, of course, you can become more selective and eliminate potential positions according to your priorities, but you should realize that flexibility is extremely important at the beginning of your career, as most of us literally cannot afford to be too particular!

Tip: Brainstorm a list of criteria, and then prioritize them in order of most to least important. Then, you will have an idea of which preferences you will and will not sacrifice, depending on the type of job you are seeking. You may, for example, be willing to take a lower salary or a less desirable location for an exceptional mentor or for continued professional development. If you have personal preferences like not wanting to live in a humid area or far from your family, make these a priority. This is the beauty of setting your individual criteria: they are yours to create, balance, and maintain.

> We aim to alleviate some of the mystery by giving assistance and practical knowledge to emerging local government leaders.

Searching for a Job Opening

Once your criteria are set, searching for the right fit takes some time, even if you already have a position. Job searching can be cumbersome, but numerous helpful resources are available in print and online, such as the ICMA JobCenter and state leagues and associations (state associations are most important if you are looking in a specific region).

Despite all of the technology available, many localities are limited in their advertising budgets and may only post their positions in one publication, fostering the perception that there are few available jobs. At first glance, this can be frustrating, especially given all the hype about needing new leaders to replace a retiring generation of city and county managers.

Here are some ways to vault this roadblock of not knowing where a job is listed: work with a mentor, talk to your university career-counseling center, and search the Web pages of specific city/county human resources departments. There are many resources; you just have to invest time and effort in locating and navigating through them.

Tip: If you are searching for a job during the winter holidays, do not get frustrated! This time of year tends to be a season of family and friends, not of available jobs, so be patient with the lack of postings. Most local government professionals suggest that the majority of job postings appear in the spring and summer months, as this time is synchronous with university graduations, and in general it is just an easier time for individuals and families to relocate.

Preparing for the Interview

Great news and congratulations—you have received a call for your first interview (Yes, "first" is not a typo, as you will probably have at least a first and second interview, if not more.) What do you do next? How do you prepare yourself for the interview? There are several things you can do in advance.

First, check out the locality's Web site with a more critical eye. Look at various adopted plans, such as the community's general plan, strategic plans or goals, and mission statement. Take time to skim the community vision as well as its adopted budget; these documents will give you additional insight into the main foci of the community.

Another useful resource that most organizations place online is a catalog of meeting agendas and

minutes, which are easy to scan for an overall picture of the priorities and challenges that a community faces. Try to determine the community's personality, what topics and ideals are important to it, and how it proposes to maintain or achieve its goals.

A regular Internet search by Google or by using NewsVoyager (www.newspaperlinks.com/voyager.cfm) will help you find local news about the communities in which you are interested. While this type of research can be time-consuming it is essential to gaining a better understanding of the community and could be the edge you need over other interviewees.

While the local Web site and local news sources are useful tools in learning about the community, yet another tool is the chamber of commerce's Web site. Skimming the chamber's site and, if possible, requesting information from its staff will provide insight into the local business community. This is especially valuable if you are not familiar with the area. The initial interview may be broad and not very community-specific, but this type of information will afford you a solid foundation of knowledge you can draw on for the first and future interviews.

Once you have gathered data on a community from these sources, you may want to ask around within the profession (or among your college professors) to see what these people may know about the area. Local government professionals generally share information and nuggets of wisdom they might have about a community itself or its neighbors, as they have been in the position of preparing for an interview themselves and understand the discovery process that newcomers are engaging in.

If you can find individuals who know the manager or assistant in the organization, talk to them! Friends and family might also be able to guide you in some way. You never know where solicited advice might lead you, so it will not hurt to ask as many questions as you can.

Visiting a community is another way to determine its character, as well as a means for clarifying Internet research you have already completed. Driving or walking around the locality is a must if you are not familiar with it. You can do this the day before and/or the day of your interview, if it is to be an in-person meeting. Conversing with wait staff at local restaurants, volunteers or employees at the local library, or other community members can bring a wealth of information not often found in a newspaper or on a Web

> Another useful resource that most organizations place online is a catalog of meeting agendas and minutes, which are easy to scan for an overall picture of the priorities and challenges that a community faces.

site. Remember to be judicious in how you interpret and use this information in the interview.

Tip: Take the time to fully research a locality before your interview. In addition to giving you a picture of the community, it will make you a well-informed candidate. Equally or more important, it will help you decide whether or not the community and position are the right fit for you.

Undergoing the Interview Process

Face-to-face is the most common form of interview, although within this structure there are many different styles an interviewee may encounter. A panel interview with anywhere from two to too many panelists is common, as buy-in from various leaders in the organization will be critical to the ultimate hiring decision. Staff will want to get a feel for how you will fit in with their team.

The panel may include department heads, the city manager and his/her staff and/or leaders from the community. When you receive a call for the interview, ask which type of interview format the organization is using so you can prepare appropriately. Not only is the format of the interview valuable information to you; so are the positions held by (and/or the names of) the panelists.

You can practice for an interview in a number of ways, such as talking to yourself in a mirror, rehearsing with friends and family, or simply reviewing ideas in your head. It can be difficult, however, to prepare for other testing measures that may be used during the interview. While the organization may use the meeting itself as one form of performance measurement, so too might they test your written, mathematical, and even ethical skills and knowledge.

Although a cover letter, résumé, and application are the first written self-presentations you make to a prospective employer, some communities want to see how well an applicant performs under pressure in situations that test writing or analytical skills. Before the interview, you can brainstorm the answers to such simple questions as "Why do you want to work for local government?" and "What qualifies you for this position?" This exercise will help you solidify answers in your mind and give you a list of key words and

phrases to draw on during the interview or at the time of the writing analysis.

Tip: It is important also to list several questions that you would like to ask the interview panel, to ensure that you fully understand the job and its requirements. Questions can range from "What is the supervisor's management style?" to "Is there an emphasis on continued professional development, and what would this involve?" Such questions demonstrate your interest in the position and emphasize, to the panel, the commitment you feel to the priorities you have set.

A second method of conducting interviews is by telephone, an approach usually employed if you are vying for a position that is not conveniently located to your current job or home. A conference call will entail either an individual or a panel asking you questions, as in a typical face-to-face interview. Interviewing on the phone has some advantages and some disadvantages.

The advantages of telephone interviews include the ability to hide any nervousness from the panel; a chance to jot down a question as it is asked; and an opportunity to "cheat," so to speak, by consulting notes you took while researching the community, anticipating generic questions that might be asked, and/or jotting down key words and phrases you should highlight to the panel.

Disadvantages of phone interviews are twofold: a difficulty in interpreting responses and connecting with the interviewers because you cannot make eye contact or read body language; and you're the only applicant interviewing by phone. If all other applicants appear in person, panelists can put faces to the names of these candidates and may connect with them at a higher level.

Tip: It is a good idea to make notes to yourself during an interview, regardless of whether you are meeting the interviewer by phone or in person. This practice helps organize your thoughts on questions like "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" We recommend doing a "brainstorming" exercise to answer these types of broad questions a few hours before your interview; it will help you mentally prepare for the interview and calm your nerves.

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As technology continues to make leaps and bounds, online interviews through Web cams are probably not all that far off. They may represent another tool that communities can use to cut down on travel expenses, as well as to further narrow the applicant pool at any point.

Tip: In considering travel expenses, remember that some organizations might reimburse you for traveling to the interview. Some communities do not offer this option up-front, so ask for it, but be willing to compromise if they are willing to pay for airfare but not hotel accommodations or a rental car. It can be extremely difficult for students and recent graduates to pay up-front for flights, hotels, and rented cars, so here is some free advice: Newcomers, please think about saving some money for interview travel. Seasoned managers, please be aware of the financial constraints that many newcomers are operating under.

Handling the Negotiations

Congratulations are once again in order: if you are entering negotiations, it means you have been offered a job! It is important to prepare for this step before you get the call, because you may be so excited that you have received a job offer that you may forget you can (and should) negotiate. Negotiables may include salary, benefits, vacation, professional development opportunities, and relocation expenses, to name a few items. Think about the best scenario for you, and pitch it.

The worst that can happen is that the organization will come back and offer you something slightly less than you wanted, but if you do not try to negotiate, you will never know what you could have received. Everyone negotiates in this profession—it is not a sign that you are greedy or asking for the moon. Negotiating may be something that most people are not comfortable in doing, but it is an important part of the job-search process.

Tip: If you are not comfortable in asking for what you want, many books, articles, and Web sites can help prepare you for negotiating. After reading these materials, practice mock negotiations, as you would an interview, to increase your comfort level with the process.

Identifying One Or More Mentors

During your educational experience and again when you start your new job, you will learn that a crucial step in your professional growth will be finding one or more mentors. A mentor is an individual who acts as a guide by encouraging and/or enhancing your professional development, serving as a sounding board and offering feedback, and generally caring about the progress of your career.

Finding these gems in your organization may take some sleuthing, but ideally, in your interview you have inquired about your supervisor's views on professional development and opportunities that might be available to you. The mentor you select may not be a department head or a manager in your organization but may be another professional you meet at your state association conference or at the annual ICMA conference.

Tip: Building a relationship with your mentor(s) is crucial, as they will guide you through the start of your career, help you meet and connect with other professionals, and even assist you in finding your next position as you move up the career ladder. These experienced local government practitioners are critical to the emerging leaders of our profession and are usu-

ally excited to share their passion for public service, as well as their own experiences.

Additional Resources

If you are looking to make your first, second, or final career move, there are a variety of excellent electronic resources available. ICMA.org offers multiple resources, such as job descriptions for various forms of public sector employment, professional development opportunities, and the ICMA Code of Ethics. These are vital aids to emerging leaders because of the wealth and variety of information covered.

Tip: Most important, remember as you embark on your career that you are not alone. Thousands of professionals have been in your shoes and are willing to share their knowledge and experience. Bear in mind that there is a first time for everyone, and we as a professional group are here to support one another as we work toward stronger and healthier careers and communities. Good luck!

Andrea Costello is assistant to the city manager, Sedona, Arizona (acostello@ ci.sedona.az.us), and Courtney Kleinert is assistant to the city manager, Bend, Oregon (ckleinert@ci.bend.or.us).

Four Generations Learning to Work Better Together

by Rocky White

Today, for the first time in history, there are four generations in the workplace: traditionalists (over age 60), baby boomers (42 to 60), generation Xers (26 to 41), and millennials (25 and under). This new phenomenon is affecting employee relations in city and county governments as well as in the corporate world.

Generations Working Together within Local Government

Rachel Lechuga, a human resources assistant who has worked 17 years for the city of Odessa, Texas, population 97,000, has seen the impact. "The older generations struggle more with paperwork and technology but often their 'good ol' boy' connections help them get things done effectively," she explains. "By contrast, the younger generations are more interested in what specific actions they can take and how they will be evaluated."

Because of major differences among the generations, clear communications can be an issue. That has been the case in Richmond, California, a city of 100,000 in the San Francisco Bay area. Lisa Stephenson, labor relations manager, says, "Workers may not perceive words the way they were meant. In addition to age differences, we have a racially diverse workforce, so people need to be sensitive to others or feelings can get hurt."

So what happens when, for example, a longtime 50-something city worker suddenly has to report to a new generation X supervisor who is two decades younger? "Baby boomers are team oriented and process driven," says Troy Campbell, trainer with Rockhurst University Continuing Education Center/National Seminars Group and Padgett-Thompson,

based in the Kansas City metropolitan area. "Generation Xers, on the other hand, are results driven and totally pragmatic. When the two work together, there can be serious communication problems."

When managers and employees in different age groups have to work together, learning to understand each other's core values and beliefs is a good place to start, Campbell notes. To conduct an assessment, some localities use standard tools such as Myers-Briggs, which identifies personality types and helps employees work together more effectively. Another popular assessment tool, DiSC™ (dominance, influence, steadiness, compliance), indicates whether employees are more task oriented or social oriented.

"Older workers find that it doesn't matter what someone younger listens to on their iPod," Campbell says. They can still gain an appreciation for each other and learn to communicate in the best mode for the coworker, whether it's in person, by phone, or by e-mail.

"Coworkers need to learn to be open to different personality types," adds Lisa Walker, who also conducts training for government employees at all levels through Rockhurst. "It's not just what employees are saying but how they are saying it that is important."

To deal with generational differences that affect team efficiency, both Odessa and Richmond have turned to on-site training. Odessa's supervisory training for new, younger supervisors also serves as a refresher course for older managers. Communications training is also offered to help bridge the generation gaps. "Whether it's verbal or written communications, everyone needs to get on the same page," Lechuga says.

The city of Richmond is working to improve communications by providing on-site diversity training plus instruction in customer service, grammar, and

business-writing skills. "We have employees who started at age 25 and have worked together forever," Stephenson says. "Now they need to be able to work with younger employees as well as with new workers in their mid-40s, many of whom had been in the private sector."

Through training, government workers are gaining respect for other generations. "They learn from each other," Walker says. "Traditionalists are more formal and want to hear 'Sir,' or 'Madam.' They have good experience and can tell how things worked in the past, but they also need to be open to fresh ideas from younger workers. Generation X supervisors need to learn to value the experience of these older staff members and their deep knowledge."

Customers Come in Different Generations, Too

Generational differences also have an impact on how government employees deal with the taxpayers who are their customers. Walker has seen increased interest among governments in scheduling training in customer service, dealing with difficult people, and communicating with "tact and finesse."

"Some government workers don't believe they have competition, but actually we are in competition with anyone who provides customer service," she says. "Not only do we get compared to private industry, but we have to deal with residents who come in to demand service, saying, 'I'm paying your salary!' It's easy to get defensive, but, if you're a government worker, you should remember that the way you treat residents will determine what they say about you. And the word spreads. If their neighbor had a bad experience, you'll hear about it."

So it's clear that to deal with generational differences, much of the solution lies in improving communications. As Strother Martin's character observed in *Cool Hand Luke*, "What we have here is failure to communicate." Of course, some generation Xers and millennials working in city and county government may not be familiar with that 1967 movie. But with effective training, all four generations really can learn to work better together—and to communicate more effectively with each other and with the taxpayers they serve.

Rocky White, Vice President of Business Training and Development Services, Rockhurst University Continuing Education Center/National Seminars Group and Padgett-Thompson, Shawnee Mission, Kansas
rlwhite@natsem.com

Two Perspectives on Local Government Management Internship Programs

by Rob Baker and Carol Granfield

Helping Prepare the Next Generation

In 1993, this author had a brainstorm while trying to work out a local government summer internship for one of my students in her hometown of Muscatine, Iowa. Having a background in small-town administration, I am aware of the fact that local governments have projects that need attention but a lack of resources prevents their completion.

Undergraduate students are clamoring for meaningful internship experiences that will enhance their understanding of the real world of local government management and at the same time, help them make important decisions about their futures. These two facts, in addition to my preference for experiential learning options, helped me in developing an integrated internship program for students interested in management.

My experiences taught me that positive internships had to meet the needs of three key stakeholders: 1) the local government host, 2) the student intern, and 3) the academic institution.

Genesis of the Program

To meet these specific needs I devised a program that consists of an internship combined with an academic seminar that is portable and conducted under the auspices of any local government jurisdiction. Students would be placed as interns in local government departments for a period of nine weeks and given one or more projects to complete by the end of the program.

They also would take a class twice a week and attend selected local government meetings. Aside from teaching the seminar, my role would be one of daily mentor and administrator at the work site for students to consult on their projects, to troubleshoot any issues regarding supervision, and to help facilitate the independent work that would be required for the students to complete their projects. Since the internships would be unpaid and students would be paying tuition, it seemed the only way this would be financially feasible was if the host local government provided the housing and utilities. Given these basic parameters, I proposed the idea to a colleague who at the time was city administrator of Grand Island, Nebraska.

He was enthusiastic, and we began planning how to pilot the program the following summer. In 1994, 13 students participated in the initial program, which proved to be a great success. It was followed by two more iterations—Fernandina Beach, Florida, in 1997, and Grand Island, in 2000—and numerous projects were completed for the host local governments. A list of projects can be found on the Web site at www.localintern.org.

In an effort to expand the program to new localities, I worked to get commitments from potential hosts that had expressed an interest in it, only to have them drop out during the planning stages for various reasons. I was frustrated because I knew the value of the tremendous work students were accomplishing for the communities that had initially agreed to participate.

The students were uniformly energized, and the host governments were able to obtain—essentially for free—the full-time services of eager college students who were supervised by university staff with extensive local government experience. The only cost to the government was housing, and they were at liberty to be creative to work out agreeable arrangements.

It was at this point that I thought the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) could be a clearinghouse for highlighting the benefits of the program, and it seemed that ICMA might view this as a way to promote the local government management profession to undergraduates.

As it turns out, the Association had been focusing intently on what it viewed as a "quiet crisis" of a graying profession. It was launching new initiatives to try to offset trends that seemed to suggest a potentially serious lack of new managers coming into the profession to fill pending retirements. Much of ICMA's effort, however, was focused on graduate students.

Since my program was for undergraduates, it could fill another niche in ICMA's Next Generation strategic plan. In the winter of 2003–2004, I proposed to the ICMA staff that we partner resources to pilot a process where potential local government hosts could submit proposals to ICMA, and ICMA would provide a clearinghouse and publicity function for the program.

This effort was agreeable with all parties, and the first go-round was the fall of 2004 for a summer 2005 inauguration of the new partnership. Initially, some seven potential hosts demonstrated interest and Meredith, New Hampshire, was chosen as the first local government participant.

Meredith was an ideal site for the pilot program for several reasons. First, Town Manager Carol Granfield was enthusiastic and extremely supportive of the need to help educate young people about careers in local government management.

Second, as a smaller town but located in a popular summer tourist area, Meredith had been experiencing significant growing pains, which its small-sized staff was struggling to deal with. Several projects had to be left unattended as staff members worked diligently to wrestle with providing quality services in the midst of tremendous growth pressures.

Third, as a New England town, the style of government presented a unique learning opportunity for the students. Given these advantages, Carol and I, along with program co-director, Dr. Jeff Ankrom, began planning for our arrival in Meredith on May 29. Carol's experiences in this regard, as well as her assessment of the program, follow.

Rob Baker, Professor, Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio, jbaker@wittenberg.edu

Pilot Program

Interested in hosting the LGMI Program for a summer? Contact Rob Carty by phone at (202) 962-3560, or by e-mail at rcarty@icma.org. For more information, visit icma.org/nextgen and look for the LGMI under the "Programs" tab.

Planning and Implementing the LGMI Program

As a local government manager for more than 32 years, I must say that one of the primary challenges of managing a small community is having sufficient staff and expertise to handle the varied tasks and projects that the community and elected officials expect to be addressed effectively and efficiently.

Meredith, New Hampshire, has a permanent population of just over 6,700. As a quaint tourist community on Lake Winnipesaukee, however, the population triples during the summer and fall foliage seasons. With fewer than 100 employees, department heads and the manager must wear several hats and juggle many activities. Consequently, I am always seeking grant opportunities, volunteer work, and other innovations to accomplish progressive, beneficial, and cost-effective community projects.

After reading about a joint venture between the ICMA and Wittenberg University seeking a community to host a Local Government Management Internship Program (LGMIP), I thought, "What a great idea." Given Meredith's small size and corresponding resources, it seemed like the kind of opportunity that would help provide assistance to accomplish various projects our departments need to be working on but often don't have the time or resources to begin or complete. So I decided to pursue the possibility of Meredith hosting the program.

While the program's advantages were evident, several hurdles needed to be crossed. The first was to gain support from Meredith's elected officials and management team. The board offered support if there was no cost to the town, although they were somewhat apprehensive. The management team also understandably had mixed reactions and some concerns about the need to "train" the interns and supervise them adequately. I indicated that the purpose of the program was to be beneficial, not detrimental, and would seek more information to help all of us make the final decision.

Program with Advantages

Two aspects of the program were particularly attractive. One was the opportunity to have several interns working for the town at no cost, providing the chance to mentor students interested in a public sector career. The benefits and challenges of public sector careers are often not known by college students, and I applaud Bob O'Neill and ICMA for promoting the venture to introduce these opportunities, especially given the concern about the baby boomer generation (me included) retiring in large numbers over the next several years, taking vast experience with them.

The other unique aspect of LGMIP was the involvement of on-site professors who could answer various questions from the interns and point them in the right direction for research or contacts. These aspects were helpful to me in gaining support from my community.

A key step was developing the projects that interns would work on. I wanted to have a wide range of projects. Some were initially developed based on projects I had asked departments to do that just didn't get done due to a lack of time, personnel, or funding for consultants. Others came from staff suggestions.

My goal was to have the projects as fully detailed as possible before the interns arrived. I also planned a first-day orientation with the management team, a bus tour of the town, and a dinner the first evening that included an invitation to the sponsors. A challenge was arranging housing for the nine-week program at no cost to the town, particularly since it was during our prime tourist season and typical hotel space was limited. Host families were an option but not preferred, as the intent was to keep the interns together and make them fairly self-sufficient.

Through business associates connected with Plymouth State University, 20 miles away, I was able to find a relatively inexpensive rental-housing unit in Plymouth. To fund the cost, I sent letters to various businesses, civic organizations, governmental groups, and spoke to the local Rotary Club. I outlined the projects that would be completed and as a result, was able to receive funding for housing the professor and interns for the entire period of time.

We found that local governments can be quite creative with housing options. Aside from Meredith's use of sponsors to pay for lodging at a rooming house, examples from the previous programs included turning offices in an old city hall into bedrooms and the break room into a kitchen; renting a multi-bedroom house for the students and putting the professor up in an inexpensive motel suite; and renting apartments from a local business college.

Making It Interesting

I attempted to provide the interns with broad exposure to many facets of local government. They attended board of selectmen meetings, as well as the state manager's conference; participated in a meeting and tour of the state municipal association; and attended an ICMA Web cast. Individual department heads also involved interns in their department and professional meetings.

The turnaround from apprehension and skepticism to total acceptance and support happened the very first week at a selectmen's meeting that was televised on cable TV. The selectmen not only welcomed the interns but publicly commented that they were mistaken in their original apprehension as they already had seen the positive benefits.

Initial skepticism of some department heads also quickly abated. In the first week, for example, I had a department head tell me that he had to talk to me about a problem. The professor and I met with him and learned that he thought his department was going to be assigned one of the interns but that the intern was also working on another department's project. This concern was addressed by designating the intern solely to his department for several projects. Now, instead of not wanting the interns, departments were vying for them.

Interns accomplished a significant number of positive projects, including a citizen perception survey with an estimated value of several thousand dollars if completed by a consultant, which provided Meredith with a report card on services, a town-wide sign inventory, a multi-year playground equipment replacement program, and a comprehensive parking-space study.

The projects will not only assist Meredith but can be models for other communities as project information will be provided to state municipal associations as a resource. Meredith also realized some intangible benefits by hosting the program. Most significantly, the interns' positive energy rekindled employee enthusiasm for more program innovations and involvement.

Consider Hosting

My advice to local government managers is to seriously consider hosting the internship program. Key aspects to begin working on are sponsorships to assist with housing if that is a concern. Options to seek for housing include hotels, colleges, and other group-type facilities.

A primary focus can also be to identify several projects that can be started immediately upon the interns' arrival. This can be done by simply thinking of all the items you have on the to-do list that have not yet been accomplished. Also, review what projects you have requested departments to work on that have not yet been completed for various reasons.

Preplanning and organization are important. I encourage anyone who is interested in pursuing this program to contact me. I'd be happy to share experiences and offer suggestions.

Carol Granfield, Town Manager Meredith, New Hampshire, cgranfield@meredithnh.org

If I Pass the Baton, Who Will Grab It? Creating Bench Strength in Public Management

by Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman

A Baby Boomer who is a city manager in Northern California was frustrated and perplexed. "I've got a talented Gen X assistant city manager I've been mentoring for several years," he says. "She's smart, organized, politically savvy . . . just the right profile to take over my job when I retire. But when I recently told her she was the top candidate to inherit my role her response was, 'Thanks but no thanks. I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy!'"

It took the stunned city manager a while to realize that the position he fought so hard to achieve and worked so hard to succeed in held little appeal for the next generation. Too many public managers are hearing similar responses from the next generation of talent, and for many, it's a surprising situation.

After years of budget cuts and hiring freezes, the impending retirements of millions of Baby Boomers will create huge opportunities to hire the next generation of leaders, giving them important responsibilities and authority. Yet, too often, Generation Xers are doing anything but leaping at the chance to advance. In fact, some are running kicking and screaming from jobs many boomers deemed highly desirable.

Demographic Challenges

Public management now faces a war for talent many leaders never expected. First of all, the profession is being challenged by demographics. As 80 million Baby Boomers (born 1946–64) move into their retirement years, they are followed by a much smaller population of Generation Xers—just 46 million people born between 1965 and 1981. That means the pool of workers available for grooming as managers is much smaller than it has been for decades. While the next generation following the Gen Xers (Millennials, born 1982 to 2000) are larger in number at 76 million, they are just beginning to enter the workforce and won't be available in this large number for some time to come.

To complicate matters, Generation Xers are harder to lure into public management. This is a highly independent and entrepreneurial generation. They are skeptical of large institutions and uncomfortable with layers of bureaucracy. By the age of 20, Generation Xers had already watched 23,000 hours of television. And in the media, they saw every major American institution called into question, from the presidency to the military, to organized religion, to corporate America, and yes, even state and local governments.

Too many Xers think if you can name the institution, they can name the crime. It will be tough to convince this cohort that they can have meaningful careers as public servants because the first question on their minds will be, "Can I really accomplish anything?" followed by questions like, "Can I be true to my values?"

Another aspect of the hiring challenge is that Generation Xers have so many choices. The 1990s saw the emergence of Xers into the U.S. workforce in parallel

> The good news is that with fresh tools available, like Web-based recruiting sites, it's going to be easier to reach out and touch a new generation of employees looking for an opportunity to make a difference. But to do that successfully, it will be vitally important to understand the value propositions of those to whom we wish to appeal.

with both a decade-long economic boom and the tech boom. So this generation has had a plethora of options, ranging from working at a high-tech start-up out of someone's garage to joining private industry with a great title and big signing bonus.

Too often the option of working in the public sector wasn't even on the table. For one thing, many local governments weren't actively hiring; in fact, many were downsizing. For another, the Baby Boomers held most of the managerial jobs. And because boomers were relatively young and capable, there wasn't much room for the Gen Xers working in their shadows to move up.

A January/February 2003 article in this magazine entitled "What Can Be Done? Attracting Young Adults to Careers in Local Government," by author Michele Frisby, included a chart outlining the age distribution of appointed managers. In 1971, when boomers were emerging into the public workforce, 26 percent of appointed managers were under the age of 30.

By the year 2000, appointed managers under 30 numbered only 2 percent! Clearly, when Xers complain they can't advance fast enough, they aren't just imagining it. But too many older managers have pigeonholed Xers as greedy, impatient, and even disloyal because of their desire to keep their careers in motion.

With workers on the leading edge of the baby boom turning 60 and public pension plans rewarding senior managers for retiring on time or even early, we are about to experience a massive workforce shift. As boomers retire en masse, will the next generations be around in sufficient numbers to succeed them? The answer is yes, but only if managers of all generations in the public sector pull together to create the right environment for this transition.

Attracting the Younger Generations

One of the first steps in attracting the younger generations to public service will be to consider perceptions. Too often, local governments have been seen as slow moving and low tech. They are viewed as being too bureaucratic to get anything done, with a daily sched-

ule of meetings about meetings about meetings that seems almost strangling to an outsider or to someone accustomed to lean and flat organizations.

Then there's the challenge of the hiring process. Prohibitive civil service exams, long waits to hear whether a résumé has even been received, unresponsive personnel offices, and unclear career paths are just a few of the obstacles Gen Xers cite when asked about why they gave up and went to work somewhere else.

With tech savvy Millennials, the challenge will be even greater. The majority say the first place they go to find out about jobs is the World Wide Web. Yet far too many public institutions have out-of-date Web sites with limited use of color and unexciting messages on why anyone would want to work there. These sites are often loaded with boilerplate language on required exams and job specifications and fail to communicate the vision, values, and challenges that might draw an individual to public service.

These sites also often miss opportunities to hit the hot buttons that would encourage a Millennial to take a second look. In one study, for example, Millennials were asked to name the single most important factor they would look for in a career. Their No. 1 response: the ability to make a difference. Yet, this kind of goal is seldom addressed in recruiting materials, whether Web-based or on the printed page.

Once hired, what happens? With so many boomers in the top spots, upward mobility for the younger generations has been slow. Career pathing doesn't seem to happen as rapidly as impatient Xers might hope, and they often fall victim to a dues-paying culture where the number of years they put in appears more important than what they actually accomplish. For multi-tasking Millennials who are used to loads of variety in what they do, the "silo mentality," in which moving between departments is next to impossible, will be a significant demotivator.

But even if we understand generational differences intellectually, they can be painful to confront on the personal level. Think about the city manager described above. He loves his job and is proud to have spent decades revamping the way his city is governed, creating opportunities for change and having an

> What better opportunity to paint the picture of urgency and encourage them to document and pass along the most critical knowledge? And what better chance to let the younger generations in on the secrets to their success? Remember, the brain drain won't just sap organizations of experience. When we lose top people, we lose a lifetime of contacts and affiliations.

impact on his community. His achievements, however, seem less significant when viewed through the eyes of his assistant, who expresses these sentiments about the manager's position: "You never go home on time, you've accrued about a million hours of vacation you never use, and you're divorced. Besides that, you're starting to lose your hair! Why would I want that? I'd like to actually spend time with my family!"

Pretty depressing, huh? Especially the part about the hair! Boomers may feel overworked, but we always believed we looked pretty good! Seriously, when asked about their jobs, many idealistic boomers working in government today feel their sacrifices have been justified because they were able to have a significant impact on the way things get done. They are proud of their accomplishments and can see tangible results for the battles they've fought. Why is it so hard to get the next generations to grasp that side of things?

First of all, managers need to do a better job of touting local government success stories and painting a picture of what does get accomplished. It's too easy for the media to cover budget shortfalls or the latest public works snafus that make local leaders look more like Abbott and Costello than Donald Trump. Successes in government can be tricky to cover and are often thought of as "not sexy enough" by those writing the articles.

The good news is that with fresh tools available, like Web-based recruiting sites, it's going to be easier to reach out and touch a new generation of employees looking for an opportunity to make a difference. But to do that successfully, it will be vitally important to understand the value propositions of those to whom we wish to appeal.

Management Has Plenty to Offer

What is an employee value proposition? Simply put, it's the set of values that will attract an employee to come to work—and stay—with you. The challenge with value propositions is that different values appeal to different generations. For example, the Traditionalist generation (born prior to 1946) felt the fear and force of the Great Depression. A government job with an accompanying pension, benefits, and promise of lifetime employment was highly desirable.

For many boomer public employees, the pension plan has never looked better, especially when they can retire at 90 percent of pay at age 58! But for younger generations, who are looking at potentially holding down six to 10 different careers in their lifetime, a far-off pension guarantee doesn't hold the same allure. Remember, Xers are the generation that in one study said they believe they have a greater chance of seeing

a UFO in their lifetime than a Social Security check. So when recruiting this skeptical workforce, playing the pension card won't be as effective.

What does work in appealing to the next generations? It's important to realize that public management has plenty to offer. Rather than completely reinventing itself, the public sector must take stock of its best value propositions and put these front and center. How do we do this?

First, the managers and recruiters who are handling the hiring should keep in mind that Generation Xers are searching for a place to call home. The financial upheavals of the dot-com bust and the post-9/11 world are fresh in the minds of many. This generation is beginning to seek a career where they can settle in for a long-term commitment to work that feels more stable.

They also are a generation in search of mentors. During the formative years of Generation X, the U.S. divorce rate tripled. Too many came home after school to an empty house or were packed off to after-school programs. Their grandparents often lived 2,000 miles away, and the neighborhood parents weren't out on the front porch dispensing valuable advice—they were at the office. For a disaffected generation, the opportunity to find stability and have access to seasoned mentors can be a big draw.

A second value proposition to consider is that Generation Xers are looking for work/life balance. A recent Harris Poll found that 80 percent of Gen X men said that having more time with their families was more important than more money or more challenging work. We certainly wouldn't have seen that type of response from Baby Boomers at a similar age.

And even if boomers craved more balance, they would not have felt comfortable asking for it. With some 80 million peers competing with them for the same jobs, boomers quickly learned to sacrifice personal needs to get ahead. With their fewer numbers, Gen Xers have had the leverage in the workplace to pressure employers to create more flexible options. In many cases, public entities have a hiring advantage—they can offer more reasonable work hours than the private sector.

In its colorful and appealing new recruiting Web site, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) provides a Letterman-like list of the "Top Ten Reasons to Join the IRS." One of the first reasons is time for fun, family, and friends. Not the language you'd expect from a huge government agency, and yet the IRS realizes its ability to offer balance can be a key recruiting advantage.

Time to Start Training and Mentoring

A third value proposition to be aware of in attract-

ing the next generation of leaders is that they want to hit the ground running. They are not willing to wait around for years paying dues until someone decides to grant them responsibility. The good news is, with so many boomers approaching retirement, lots of new positions will be opening up. Now is prime time to start grooming, growing, and training younger employees to fill these spots.

Rather than see the upcoming boomer exodus as disastrous, which is how many boomers tend to view it, we need to see it as an opportunity. As one seasoned and wise public works manager put it, "When we bring in a new generation of managers, we can bring in a new generation of management styles and techniques. There are changes we've needed to make for years, and with an influx of new people, we can get a fresh start."

The coming talent gap creates an ideal opportunity to create special training programs for high-potential employees to be groomed for their next career step. This should provide plenty of motivation for those who were worried that upward mobility in the public sector would automatically move at a snail's pace.

A fourth consideration in understanding the value propositions of the younger generations is the coming brain drain that could occur as highly skilled Traditionalists and Baby Boomers walk out the door, along with decades of insider knowledge. Too often this is knowledge that won't ever be replaced unless we start now to capture it. While this can seem daunting, it's a prime opportunity to put the best and brightest senior people to work as coaches, teachers, role models, and mentors to the next generations.

We said earlier that Xers are a generation in search of mentors but don't underestimate how important hands-on coaching will be to the Millennial generation. Remember, they've been raised by intensely involved, communicative Baby Boomers who have included their offspring in all sorts of family decisions. As a result, the Millennials are a highly collaborative generation that reports that their best role models are

their parents.

This is a far cry from the "don't trust anyone over 30" mentality of the boomers when they were teenagers. You can expect Millennials to see access to coaching from those a few notches up the ladder as an attractive recruiting value proposition. One-to-one coaching and mentoring can be a chance to let the younger generations in on the secrets to Baby Boomers' and Traditionalists' success.

Remember, the brain drain won't just sap organizations of experience. When we lose top people, we lose a lifetime of contacts and affiliations. One county manager put it this way: "If we have a problem, I can pick up the phone and call exactly the right person to solve it. When I retire, my replacement won't have those contacts because it took a lifetime to build them." That's true, unless we start the transitioning process now.

Younger employees need to build their own network of valuable contacts if they are going to succeed. To make the connections that will allow them to get ahead, they will have to be willing to join such professional and networking associations as ICMA or the International Personnel Management Association, and to attend local meetings held by the chamber of commerce or Rotary. Unfortunately, many seem uninterested in sacrificing family time for time spent in meetings and on committees. Mentors can do a lot to bridge this gap by inviting high potentials to join them in attending a special program and by introducing them to people they need to know.

Associations can do more to adapt meetings to fit members' schedules. They can rotate meeting times to accommodate members with daycare and family challenges, hold meetings by phone, and complete other tasks via the Internet and e-mail. They can also create committees with shorter time horizons. A Gen Xer might be willing to serve for a few months on a program committee to plan the upcoming year, as opposed to signing on for a

Table 1. Who Are the Generations?

Generation	Influences	Traits
Traditionalists: Born prior to 1946, 75 million	Great Depression, New Deal, World War II, GI Bill, Cold War, Pearl Harbor, Korean War, and A-Bomb.	Patriotic, loyal, desire to leave a legacy, fiscally conservative, and faith in institutions.
Baby Boomers: Born 1946-1964, 80 million	Booming birthrate, economic prosperity, recession, women's and civil rights movements, expansion of suburbia, Vietnam, Watergate, anti-war protests, sex, drugs, and rock 'n' roll.	Competitive, question authority, desire to put their own stamp on institutions, sandwiched, and optimistic.
Generation Xers: 1965-1981, 46 million	Sesame Street, MTV, personal computer, divorce, Title IX, AIDS, crack cocaine, and missing children on milk cartons.	Eclectic, resourceful, self reliant, skeptical of institutions, highly adaptive, and independent.
Millennials: 1982-2000, 76 million	9-11/terrorism, fall of the Berlin Wall, expansion of technology and the media, mixed economy, violence, drugs, and gangs.	Globally concerned, integrated, cyber-literate, media savvy, realistic, and environmentally conscious.

Source: BridgeWorks. Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman. Copyright 2005. Web site, www.generations.com; toll free, 888/519-1187.

multi-year term.

We also recommend that associations give younger members a place at the decision-making table. Too often a committee is tearing its hair out wondering what kind of programming will attract Xers and Millennials, but when you look around the room, no one in the group is under 40!

Another tip: Sell Xers on the career benefits of joining associations. The old value proposition of joining because it is one's civic duty is likely to fall on deaf ears. But a new value proposition of creating contacts that will help advance your career or of taking home valuable knowledge to help you do your job better might just click in.

Younger employees need to do their part as well. Although family and personal time is important, much can be gained by donating time to creating professional affiliations among all generations. While Xers tend to have strong networks of friends, they have often felt shut out by Baby Boomers and have not made the commitment necessary to loop the older generations into their networks. Everyone needs to be willing to invite another generation to attend a meeting or meet with a critical contact.

Become Advocates

Fifth, in recruiting and retaining younger employees, a critical value proposition for Generation X will be the ability to build robust career paths. This is a generation that wants to hit the ground running and make an impact. They want to know what's in the future and what steps they will need to take to get there.

Too many managers today are reluctant to talk with employees about career paths or hesitant to fight for new ways of moving their high potentials through the system toward promotion. Seasoned employees are going to have to stop feeling competitive with members of the next generation and become their advocates.

In terms of career paths, the public sector has a real advantage in being able to offer younger employees the chance to work on huge projects with big budgets. A garage-based business might look fun because you can wear jeans and a tee-shirt to work. But when the total project budget is 50 bucks, ambitious employees will eventually want the opportunity to do and to create something more.

The careers Web site for the Social Security Administration scores a direct hit with this language: "At Social Security, we don't follow the newest IT trends— we make them. . . . You won't find the challenge of maintaining systems this complex and innovative anywhere else." That's smart talk coming from a large institution and a powerful message for a generation looking for big challenges.

Finally, in thinking about value propositions, rec-ognize that the changeover from the Baby Boomer- and Traditionalist-dominated workplace to the next generation of leaders may require more than just retooling expectations. We may have to retool some jobs. Job descriptions that are 20 or 30 years old may need to be rewritten to reflect the complexity of today's positions.

Also, jobs currently requiring a superhuman effort to perform might need to be redesigned to be more manageable. Work assignments that are repetitive, boring, or frustrating might need retooling to allow more variety. At the very least, managers should consider cross-training employees in some of the more mind-numbing jobs to provide new challenges.

One local government-owned utility recently embarked on cross-training back-office employees in at least three different customer service jobs. Not only are most of the employees energized by the change (granted, some are intimidated), but the utility now has back-up for when a key employee is out sick or leaves.

An additional bonus is that the newly trained employees feel their skill set has become more valuable. Multitasking Millennials are gratified by the opportunity to do multiple jobs simultaneously and will see this as a chance to enhance their résumés, as well as learn more about their work skills and preferences. The point is that it's not an insult to current job holders when we admit the job has to change to work for the next generation of employees or to be more

Why All the Energy around the Generational Divide?

- Demographers predict a coming worker shortage as Boomers retire.

- Within seven years, 30 million currently employed workers will be over age 55.

- For the first time ever, the next generation of skilled workers will be neither larger nor better educated than the previous one.

- The skilled worker gap is estimated to be 5.3 million by 2010, 14 million by 2020.

- Organizations that become "employers of choice" now will have the advantage in finding and keeping employees in the future.

Source: BridgeWorks. Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman. Copyright 2005. Web site, www.generations.com.

Table 2. Rewards

The generations view rewards in different ways. This can affect the strategies that are used to recruit, engage, manage, and retain them.

Generation	Factoids	Tips
Traditionalists... want help easing into retirement.	• 40% of traditionalists said their company did not do a good job of making them want to stay. • 65% said they would not feel comfortable talking with their manager about a different career track within the company. • 73% plan to return to work in some capacity after they retire.	• Recognize and tap into the loyalty of existing workers. • Remember, traditionalists need career paths too. • Provide training to bring them up to speed. • Put them to work as mentors, coaches, role models.
Baby Boomers... want robust careers and help juggling it all.	• 43% of boomers said they lack opportunities to be mentored where they work. • 30% said that not having a mentor contributes to their job dissatisfaction. • 75% said time off would be the best reward they could receive.	• Understand that boomers want to put their own stamp on things. • Focus on "making an impact." • Continue to offer training and career-pathing opportunities. • Beware of boomer burnout. • Offer support to help them balance their busy lives.
Generation Xers... want balance and freedom.	• Only 17% of Xers thought a lifetime career with one company was a good goal (compared to 35% of boomers and 70% of traditionalists). • 30% of Xers have left a job due to lack of training opportunities. • 80% of Xer men said time with family is more important than challenging work or a higher salary.	• Focus on *career* security not *job* security. • Communicate regularly about development and career path opportunities. • Offer flexible work options. • Create opportunities for work/life balance. • Provide constant, unfiltered feedback.
Millennials... want work that has meaning for them.	• Millennials are globally aware, cyber-literate, and techno-savvy. • They recently ranked "making a difference" as the most important factor when looking for a job. • They don't just accept diversity, they expect it.	• Make sure they know about you. • Help them visualize the role they could play in your organization. • Understand their need to collaborate. • Focus on how they can make a difference from day one.

Source: BridgeWorks. Lynne Lancaster and David Stillman. Copyright 2005. Web site, www.generations.com; toll-free, 888/519-1187. Lancaster's and Stillman's latest book *When Generations Collide: Who They Are. Why They Clash. How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work* (HarperCollins) is available in bookstores and online.

relevant within an ever-changing public system.

By recognizing the need to build bench strength in public management and understanding the values of the next generations of employees, leaders can do a lot to ease the coming war for talent.

Remember our boomer city manager with the reluctant replacement? He got over his frustration with his employee and decided to work with her to see how he could retain her in local government. While she still doesn't want to take over his job, he has uncovered other high-level positions in which he believes she can excel. She is enthusiastic about the possibilities, and he has never felt more positive about placing the future of his city in the hands of the next generation of leaders.

Lynne C. Lancaster and David Stillman are co-founders of BridgeWorks, LLC, based in Sonoma, California, and Minneapolis, Minnesota (phone, 888/519-1187; Web site, www.generations.com). Lancaster and Stillman are authors of the book When Generations Collide. Who They Are. Why They Clash. How to Solve the Generational Puzzle at Work *(HarperBusiness, 2002). They will be keynote speakers at ICMA's 91st Annual Conference in Minneapolis, September 25–28, 2005.*

Advice on My Career Path from Five Wise Men

by Mark Israelson

I am one of those people who naturally have a lot of questions and little patience. I am often quoted as saying that I want patience, and I want it now! It is a horribly annoying trait. I also happen to be, however, a fortunate assistant. I have a boss and mentor who is patient and can see the potential in someone who can drive the sanest person mad.

As is my nature, I frequently question my boss on the future of the local government management profession and, more specifically, on my future in the profession. It was during one of these many discussions that my boss decided I needed to find answers to my questions from a new source: five wise men.

To begin with, let me say that I did not go into this meeting with these men as a representative of assistants for the state of Texas. I went into it with a purely selfish intention, that is, to find answers to my questions. But these are questions that most, if not all, of us have. You see, I am not a representative of you. I am you!

As I arrived at the meeting, I was a bit apprehensive. I'd never met any of the wise men. I had simply spoken to one of them on the phone to set up the meeting and to forward my résumé so they could all have a glimpse at my qualifications and experience.

Heading into the meeting, I had no idea what to expect. All I knew was that these men had vast experience in the local government management profession and were greatly respected by my boss. And because my boss had called in a favor, they were willing to meet with me and answer my questions.

My first question was: What is the job of a city or county manager? I know, I know, you all think this is an easy question with an obvious answer. But I don't know if you ever tried to articulate what a manager does. Think about it. There are so many different things that a manager does in a day, let alone a career. How do you simplify the job description into one simple statement?

The short answer is: you can't. Being a manager is being a "jack of all trades and master of some." Be a good generalist, the wise men told me. The wise men gave me several essential duties that, when connected, gave me a great foundation for understanding the responsibilities of a manager.

> The wise men and I discussed decisionmakers versus advisers. Advisers are valuable people, such as department directors or assistant managers. They develop alternatives and can master a situation but may feel uncomfortable making a decision and living with the consequences. A manager must be a decisionmaker who will live with the consequences.

There Are Duties

The first duty is setting an agenda for the council. In other words, you need to coordinate requests from council, staff, citizens, and the business community into one organized program.

Second, you need to be a representative of the community. You should attend community festivals, meetings of the chamber of commerce, football games, and lunches with businesses and developers.

Third, a manager has the duty to protect the council by assessing the risk and importance of programs and decisions. The council doesn't need to be burdened with making decisions over routine or small items, but it does need to know the implications of making a policy decision. It is the manager's job to know when decisions can be made by staff and when a policy needs to be made by elected officials.

Last, and probably most important, is the responsibility of the manager to coordinate communications. It is the manager's job to ensure that all councilmembers have the information they need to make informed decisions, and also he or she should understand the direction the council wants the local government to go toward. It is your job to make sure that the council feels comfortable with what is going on in the community.

There Are Skills

My next questions were: What makes a good manager? Why are some managers getting in trouble with their councils? Foremost on my list of managerial assets were such soft skills as speaking ability, listening, capacity to manage relationships, and patience. At this point, we had a quick discussion on whether these skills are inherent in a person or are learned.

The consensus was that they are inherent in a person but that they can be refined through training. Soft skills can also be called people skills. First, you should be able to identify who has them and who does not. Look around your office, and you can see those people who can stand up and make a presentation and those people who would rather do anything but speak in public. A manager has to be able to speak in public.

A second skill is to be able to simplify situations and terminology for the council. A manager should realize that all people are not engineers or accountants; he or she should be able to take a technical report and put it into words that nonspecialist councilmembers can understand.

Third, a good manager must also have sound character. This is a position of honor, and managers should be ethical, have integrity, and be comfortable in being themselves with the council. If you have to "act" to be a manager, you are probably not going to enjoy the experience and could quickly end up in trouble with elected leaders.

Finally, a good manager is decisive. The wise men and I discussed decisionmakers versus advisers. Advisers are valuable people, such as department directors or assistant managers. They develop alternatives

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and can master a situation but may feel uncomfortable making a decision and living with the consequences. A manager must be a decisionmaker who will live with the consequences.

Looking for a Place

Next on my list was: What factors should I address when considering local governments or specific jobs? This question brought by far the most lengthy of all the responses by the wise men, but the clear key was finding a good match, or "fit." A good match is a community where you and your family are going to feel comfortable.

You must include your spouse (partner or significant other) and family in your decision. Together, you all need to enjoy the recreational opportunities, the proximity to other family members, the school system, and all aspects of the community that will allow your home life to remain healthy and happy.

You need to know what type of manager the locality is looking for. Do elected leaders want a people person, someone analytical, someone with previous city or county management experience, or someone with specific experience, as in public works or finance?

When considering a local government, choose one that is looking for someone with your strengths. If you go to a community that is looking for something that is a weakness in you, your weakness will be exposed. But if you feel you can work with the council, and communication flows easily, it's probably a good fit.

You should also look for a place with a good council-manager tradition. You want to see longevity in the previous managers, and you should definitely contact these previous managers to get their input on the community. You want to see if they left on good terms with the council, and what the major issues are for the community.

You should do as much, if not more, research or homework on the community as it does on you. Spend the time to get a feel for the place and for the stakeholders. Whom do you need to know in the community? Visit the barbershop, the drugstore, the local diner, a chamber meeting, the mall, a football booster club, or the hardware store. If you've looked at a community and don't feel that it is a good fit for you, applying for a manager's position there is a bad idea.

What size of community should I consider: a big city, a medium-sized county, or a small village? This was another key question for me because the vast

majority of communities in Texas have a population of 15,000 or less. For the purposes of our discussion, I assumed that a big city has more than 50,000 in population; a medium-sized jurisdiction has 15,000 to 50,000 in population; and a small town has less than 15,000 in population.

The wise men again referred to the fit on this issue. Do you want to be in a big city? If you do, is it mathematically possible to start in a small city and work your way up to a big one by changing to a bigger city every couple of years? Yes, but I think it is improbable.

How many changes would you have to make to go from a town of 5,000 to a city of 50,000, assuming a jump of 20 percent in population at each move, but also recalling that you must adhere to the ICMA Code of Ethics and stay a minimum of two years in each position? It would take you 13 moves. Considering a minimum of two years in each position, you would have spent 26 years and moved 13 times to get to a large city.

In addition, most large places either groom someone for the manager's position from within or go outside to another organization of similar size to fill the position. Working in a big locality means working on a different scale from the smaller ones. The problems may be the same, but the scale has changed.

You have to consider that many of the department directors for larger localities have more employees and larger budgets than a manager in a small to mid-sized locality. This being said, there is no departmental or assistant manager experience that equals that of being the manager.

Last Question

My last question to the wise men had two parts: How do I know if I am ready? And, if I am not ready now, what do I do to become ready in the future, if this is my career aspiration? I know that people shouldn't answer a question with a question, but the response I received from the wise men was: Are you ready?

In other words, you'll know when you are ready, when you start applying for and pursuing manager positions. They told me that the experience I have, as well as my education (a master's degree in public

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administration), qualifies me to be a city or county manager right now.

But I still had to answer the question for myself: Am I ready? As far as preparing myself to be ready in the future, their answers were clear: I should take on more responsibility with each move and gain experience wherever I could. I asked about moving out of a city manager's office, only to try to return to it.

They replied that it is the responsibility, not the title or department, that matters in trying to move up. Getting front-line experience and addressing the shortcomings you might have in your professional experience are keys to being a well-rounded candidate for the next level.

Did you notice that in all my questions, I never asked about compensation? But it did come up. Obviously, you don't want to take a significant pay cut from your current position. But you might consider a small cut to get the city or county management experience. It would be nice to have a great pay raise; however, do you really expect a small to mid-sized community to give a huge salary to a young professional with little or no managerial experience? It's probably not going to happen.

As crucial as salary is, you should note that an employment contract can be just as important. One wise man stated that an employment contract should be nonnegotiable. A contract will give you and your family security if you happen to be on the losing end of a 4-to-3 vote after a locality's next election.

They also suggested becoming financially stable. I know this is an issue for my generation, as we have two incomes, and, quite frankly, we spend two incomes. If it's possible, they suggested trying to live on one income so you have the option to be more mobile in your career.

The lasting impression I took away was of these five wise men, men who have all been in this profession for a long time, most since before I was born—and they all still love it. They were willing to take the time to meet me, a person with far too many questions, and then patiently tell me the answers I was desperate to have and the things I needed to learn.

As I returned to my office, I felt like I had been lent a moment of clarity, and I had a little more direction

and control over my future. It was this empowered feeling that led me to write this article, hopefully for the benefit of at least one other assistant.

In the weeks following my conversation, I was able to answer many of my own questions about my career: Do I still want to be a manager; if so, what size of community would I want to be in; and would I be ready?

Want to know what I've decided? My choice is to become a city manager of a big city. I hope readers will find this article useful in setting their career goals.

Mark Israelson is assistant to the city manager, Plano, Texas (marki@plano.gov). Author retains the copyright to this article.

Pioneering the Future: A New Generation of Local Government Professionals

by John Nalbandian

The Local Government Management Fellows (LGMF) Program was begun in response to demographic trends predicting significant retirements of experienced local government executives. This will occur at the same time as political, economic, and social trends worldwide are thrusting into prominence the role of local and regional governance.

ICMA, in partnership with the International Hispanic Network, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, and the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, established this one-year fellowship program—a full-time work experience—with participating local governments in order to give the best and most recent MPA, public policy, or public affairs master's-degree graduates an attractive opportunity to learn about and enter the local government management profession.

The pioneering sponsoring local governments are:

- Catawba County, North Carolina
- Charlotte, North Carolina
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- San José, California
- Sarasota County, Florida
- Winchester, Virginia

In 2005, ICMA expects to add to this list, offering a dozen fellowships.

Meet the Fellows

As chair of the LGMF Program Advisory Board, it is my pleasure to profile this pioneering group of Local Government Management Fellows.

Kelly Spivey (serving in San José, California) spent two semesters studying abroad—a summer in Mexico and a semester in Spain—and earned her MPA degree from the University of Toledo in 2004. Prior to her selection as a fellow, Kelly gained work experiences in several nonprofit organizations and as a research and teaching assistant at the University of Toledo in Ohio. Of her experiences, Kelly writes, "I have spent all of my professional and volunteer time working alongside the public sector for nonprofit agencies that address myriad needs of the community. These experiences… culminate in my aspiration to work in the public sector," specifically in local government, she adds.

Having moved from Ohio to northern California, Kelly seems to be off to a great start toward this goal through the projects she is involved in. Gathering information relevant to the closing of the downtown hospital and trauma center and crafting a request for qualifications for potential site reuse has brought her into contact with high-level administrators on a critical administrative and political issue. Among her varied projects, she has worked on a neighborhood revitalization initiative, hosting community meetings and doing surveys in Spanish.

Kelly was attracted to the LGMF Program as the path to a major geographic move that permits her to use her Spanish professionally. She loves the diverse opportunities she has been given. Like other fellows, Kelly has found that a major challenge is defining her role in the organization. With flexibility and moving among different departments and assignments comes ambiguity, and learning to adapt to this is a challenge.

Her most satisfying experiences center on the high-level access she enjoys to administrators and elected

officials in this city of more than 6,000 employees. Kelly recommends the LGMF Program for the variety of opportunities it offers, both in organizational setting and geography. She likes the freedom to explore her future that the fellowship has provided. "It signals a new level of professional freedom and exploration," she writes.

Mary Sassi (serving in Sarasota County, Florida) graduated from Arizona State University in 2004 with a master's degree in public administration. Included among Mary's numerous social-service volunteer activities was spending the spring of 1999 in India interviewing Tibetan refugees as part of a study abroad program.

Mary's past work experience has included supervising an extended daycare center and serving as an analyst for the Charleston County (South Carolina) School District. She was attracted to the LGMF Program because it was an opportunity to cultivate direct experiences that would contribute to her development as a future leader with a personal goal of building public/private nonprofit partnerships in service to the community.

Mary's varied experiences in Sarasota County are contributing toward her goal. She has worked on an affordable housing/community housing initiative, has helped conduct economic and fiscal impact studies for the construction of a conference center, and has become involved in a program that coordinates various maintenance efforts and capital improvements into integrated neighborhood plans.

During several hurricanes this past season, Mary worked in the emergency operations center and considers herself fortunate to have been invited to participate in an extensive staff development program that the county sponsors.

Mary was attracted to the LGMF Program by the breadth of experience it offered. She saw the program as a way of gaining knowledge of the many facets of local government so she could begin to develop big-picture thinking on community issues. Her challenge, like that of the other fellows, is learning to manage her fellowship. She has been given free rein to become involved in the projects that she values, but this is a little daunting at the same time as it is gratifying.

She says she would recommend LGMF as an opportunity to learn in a practical way how to manage and lead in a political environment. This knowledge cannot be taught, she says: "It can only be experienced and observed, and the fellowship provides a bird's-eye view from which to do this."

Jamie Privuznak (serving in Charlotte, North Carolina) graduated with an MPA degree in 2004 from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Before graduate school, Jamie worked internships in the

Florida state attorney's office; in the sheriff's office of Martin County, Florida; and at the Charlotte Douglas International Airport in Charlotte. Her goal is to be a leader in city management, and her internships have helped to solidify her long-term commitment to a life of public service. Jamie's work in Charlotte has included serving as project coordinator for the transfer of Mecklenburg County's zoning services to the city of Charlotte, providing staff support to the transportation committee and transportation cabinet, and supporting the work of the ethics review committee. In these tasks, Jamie has worked with several departments and has prepared proposals for the city council and county commission.

Jamie has seen her academic work come to life in the fellowship program. She has taken advantage of the chance the program affords, to watch which policy issues develop and which seem to be ignored. She enjoys the opportunity to seek out projects that will add value to the city.

Like the other fellows, Jamie prizes the chance to work with higher-level officials who have the knowledge and willingness to guide her. She recommends the fellowship as giving excellent access to just about all the "moving parts" and processes of local government.

Tameika Leslie (serving in Catawba County, North Carolina) graduated with an MPA degree from the University of North Carolina–Greensboro in 2004. Tameika's goal is to become a city manager. After earning her undergraduate degree, Tameika worked in the private sector for two years, then returned to school to satisfy her interests and fulfill her commitment to public service.

She says, "My own desire to give back to the community stems from the fact that I have had several positive female role models in my life encouraging me to realize all of my own dreams and goals and helping me recognize my own worth. I know that I will continue to seek opportunities that will allow me to give back."

Tameika is a management analyst in the county manager's office in Catawba County, where she has worked on a variety of projects. In the preparation of budget recommendations, she conducted outcome audits of several departments, analyzed and made recommendations regarding additional staffing in the district attorney's office, worked on the capital improvements budget process, been involved as the county's liaison with the NAACP in helping to coordinate county services, and completed an economic impact analysis.

Tameika saw the LGMF Program as an opportunity to launch a career from a base where she would have a variety of experiences and access to top-level

administrators. This is being accomplished as she fulfills her work assignments because she has been given enough latitude to actually "own" the projects she is working on.

The challenge for her is learning to think "big picture," having discovered that, even with good information and the right people at the table, the dynamics of policy development are complex. She says that being an LGM fellow has confirmed her "desire to establish a career in public service." She continues, "Participating in the program has been one of the most challenging and rewarding opportunities I have ever been involved with."

Jamie Lantinen (serving in Minneapolis, Minnesota) graduated in August 2004 with a master of science degree in public policy and management from Carnegie Mellon University. Jamie spent a year abroad as an undergraduate at Oxford in the United Kingdom.

Jamie works out of the office of the city coordinator (CAO) in Minneapolis. His assignments have included service as project manager for the city's community engagement effort, assisting city departments in results-oriented business planning, helping to coordinate the development of budget pages and the collection of performance measures for the city's annual report, and serving on a task force to analyze and present the results of a citywide employee survey.

Jamie says that as soon as he heard about the LGMF Program, he knew it was a perfect match. "I had the skills from graduate school and work experience, but I needed the high-level exposure and hands-on experience of being in a government to tie it all together. LGMF offered that." Most challenging to him is finding the time to fit in all of the opportunities that have been made available.

Most satisfying is being able to "talk with and learn from so many talented, dedicated, and caring public

2005 Local Government Management Fellowship Program (LGMF)

Created through a partnership involving ICMA, the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, and the International Hispanic Network, the LGMF Program was created to generate interest in local government careers among recent master's program graduates.

This highly competitive, career development opportunity places fellows in a full-time, full-access local government management track position shaped by direct mentorship under senior government leaders and rotational assignments.

To date, the LGMF coalition has received commitments from these local governments to host fellows during the 2005–2006 program year:

- Arlington County (Arlington), Virginia
- Catawba County (Newton), North Carolina
- Charlotte, North Carolina (continuing participation with 2004 fellow)
- Dakota County (Hastings), Minnesota
- Hampton Roads, Virginia (accepting two fellows)
- Henderson, Nevada
- Mesa, Arizona
- Miami Beach, Florida
- Minneapolis, Minnesota
- Montgomery County, Maryland
- San José, California
- Sarasota County (Sarasota), Florida
- Tucson, Arizona
- University Place and Puyallup, Washington
- Washoe County, Nevada
- Wichita, Kansas
- Winchester, Virginia

More than 90 graduate-level students submitted applications to the 2005 program. Six members of the LGMF Program Advisory Board have completed evaluating those applications, and finalists' applications are being sent to the host local governments for review and to set up interviews.

Members of the advisory board are John Nalbandian, professor of public administration, University of Kansas (board chairman); Frances Gonzalez, assistant city manager, San Antonio, Texas; Sylvester Murray, director, Public Management Program, College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University; Tim O'Donnell, city manager, Brea, California; Michael Rogers, executive vice president, Corporate Services, MedStar Health, Inc.; and Bonnie Therrien, town manager, Wethersfield, Connecticut.

Student applications for the 2006 Fellowship will be available on ICMA's Web site in late August, 2005. Local governments interested in hosting a fellow should contact Rob Carty at 202/962-3560; e-mail, lgmfprogram@icma.org.

servants in diverse areas of the organization." Jamie contrasts his fellowship with a typical entry-level job, which may be limited in scope. He comments that the LGMF Program "can give fellows the opportunity to see the practical applications of their studies unfold before their eyes."

Patricia Dossett (serving in Winchester, Virginia) served on the board of supervisors in Spottsylvania County, Virginia, before earning her MPA from Virginia Commonwealth University. With a strong commitment to public service, Patricia was a community organizer, political activist, and mother of four before donning her knapsack and returning to campus. A self-labeled "late bloomer," she says she is committed to the empowerment of all voices in the governance process.

Since her selection, she has implemented an executive leadership program, researched employer-assisted housing, developed a community engagement program with CDBG-entitlement neighborhoods, completed a SWOT analysis of the relationship between a nonprofit organization and the Winchester government, and helped hire a new police chief.

Patricia applied to the LGMF Program to gain experience and exposure to the administrative workings of local government, and she considers herself an "island survivor" after having completed the several hurdles in the selection process.

The most challenging aspect of her experience has been the recognition that she is in charge of her future. She is learning to adapt to a fast-paced environment where she is expected to define her goals and objectives while completing challenging assignments. Most satisfying for her is the opportunity to gain knowledge of the nitty-gritty of local government—looking inside out, in contrast to her experience as an elected official, where she already possessed a broader community perspective.

She values the variety of assignments she has been given, and she recommends the LGMF Program to other MPA graduates who want to get an inside look at how local government operates and the opportunities that are available.

A Solid Beginning

If we can judge by the experiences of the first class of fellows in the Local Government Management Fellows Program, it looks like the program is off to a solid start. All placements seem to be providing the fellows with valuable experiences and exposing them to the nitty-gritty of administrative work, as well as of policy making, in local governments nationwide.

Several of the fellows appear surprised that they have as much freedom as they do to craft their own programs. In this sense, their work is different from graduate school, where projects and assignments often are laid out clearly. This takes some getting used to, and the fellows seem to be meeting this challenge well.

The initial placements have spread the program nationwide, and next year, with about a dozen placements and fellows, the LGMF Program is

2005 Local Government Management Internship Program

Between May 23 and July 22, 2005, the town of Meredith, New Hampshire (Carol Granfield, town manager), will host 10 undergraduate students as part of Wittenberg University's 2005 Local Government Management Internship (LGMI) program.

Participating students will work in the Meredith town offices on a variety of projects for nine weeks while they gain insight into daily local government operations. The group will be accompanied by two professors from Wittenberg University, who will advise the students on their projects and course work.

This LGMI program is a component of ICMA's Next Generation Strategy, and the Association has partnered with Springfield, Ohio's Wittenberg University to market the program to potential host communities. The nine-week program combines an unpaid undergraduate internship with a class/seminar component.

Students from Wittenberg are placed as interns in a host local government and given one or more projects to complete by the end of the program. Onsite Wittenberg faculty advise students on their projects and required coursework. Students also attend class two nights per week and participate in local government meetings.

Students who participate in the Wittenberg LGMI program are not paid; instead, they receive six to eight hours of college credit for successful completion of the program. The total cost to the student is $2,700 to $3,000 and includes tuition, transportation to and from the host city, and two extended weekend excursions during the course of the program.

Host communities are responsible for providing the housing costs. Local governments interested in hosting a group of interns during the 2006 program year can learn more by visiting the Web site at www.localintern.org. Or contact Rob Carty at ICMA, 202-962-3560; e-mail, rcarty@icma.org

expected to become a more visible response to the goal of preparing a new generation of local government executives.

San José, California, decided to participate in the program because its design is similar to that of its own management fellow program, which has operated for a number of years. Peter Jensen, assistant to the city manager, says that this design involves fellows in completing four rotations of about three months each in different parts of the organization, which allows them to get a rare overview of how the locality works. It also allows them to infuse energy and new thinking into different parts of the organization.

"If everything works well, San José winds up with a candidate for permanent employment who has true insight into how the city works and has already built credibility and staff relationships," Jensen says. And the program has been successful in the past. There are former San José fellows who are assistant directors and deputy directors in the city's departments, and there are others who fill various leadership roles in the organization.

He adds that the city shows that a fellowship is a win-win situation: it can attract the best and the brightest to the organization, while it offers fellows an experience they couldn't get by being hired into an entry-level analyst position.

Joellen Daley, assistant county manager, Catawba County, North Carolina, speaks of the county's commitment: "As active members in ICMA, County Manager Tom Lundy and I knew that participation in the LGMF Program was important and necessary to promote ICMA's strategy to encourage and train the next generation of city and county managers. Catawba County has regularly offered internship opportunities in many of its departments.

Participation in the program more formally recognizes this practice and dedicates an opportunity within our organization to someone interested in local government management. We are pleased with the program thus far and look forward to continuing to participate in the future."

Ed Daley, city manager of Winchester, Virginia, another sponsoring city, notes that the LGMF Program offers a national pool of prescreened, elite candidates from the nation's accredited graduate schools of public affairs and administration. He says, "The LGMF Program is one way we can give back to our profession and continue ICMA's tradition of promoting excellence in local government management as we help prepare our successors."

John Nalbandian is a faculty member in the department of public administration, University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas (nalband@ku.edu). He was a Lawrence councilmember for nearly 10 years, including two terms as mayor. He is chairman of the LGMF Program Advisory Board.

It's a Reality: The Shrinking Talent Pool for Local Government Managers

by Frank Benest

At a summit hosted by ICMA last year, executive recruiters from around the United States underscored the dramatic shift in the talent pool for local government managers. Organized by ICMA Executive Director Bob O'Neill and this author, the summit brought together 28 executive recruiters to:

- Learn from those recruiters who are in the trenches about changing market realities.

- Share information about ICMA's Next Generation initiative.

- Engage executive recruiters in the initiative.

Demographic Crisis

In a discussion led by Don Maruska, director for the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program, executive recruiters expressed strong warnings about the demographic crisis facing the local government management profession. As 80 million baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964) retire throughout the United States economy, there are only 50 million Generation Xers (1965–1977) available to fill the vacancies left by the wave of retirees.

This is especially a challenge for the public sector, which has a higher number of older baby-boomer employees than the private sector. In the private sector, the largest replacement-talent gaps are in the managerial and administrative ranks, but, again, these gaps are even wider in the public sector. Most local government chief executives and senior managers in California, for example, are now eligible to retire.

In respect to local government, one recruiter lamented the "missing middle." Potential candidates exist who are in their 30s and 50s, but not in their 40s.

Attendees also identified a number of related phenomena worsening the demographic problem:

Lack of rewards for increasingly difficult jobs. Chief executive jobs are becoming increasingly complex, "political," and difficult because of rising levels of media scrutiny and community (and therefore council) discord. In addition, to narrow political agendas, councilmembers (especially mayors) have become more involved in trying to micromanage their local governments.

Differing values. Generation Xers want a balanced life and perceive that senior managers in local government are often consumed by work and do not have time for family, leisure, and other personal pursuits. In the post-9/11 world, senior public managers often resist moving their families, including spouses with their own careers, to new locations and taking chief executive positions that may be fraught with risk. (One recruiter

> If managers want a legacy of talented younger professionals to follow in their footsteps, they must play a marketing and public awareness role in promoting the rewards of the work and telling how they themselves have achieved fulfilling lives.

commented that "teenagers are now making career decisions for their parents.") Consequently, growing numbers of qualified candidates do not apply or back out of recruitments at the last moment.

Failure of local governments to grow their own talent. The recruiters stressed that most local governments have eliminated assistant/deputy manager or assistant/deputy department head positions as they have downsized their organizations. There is no longer an opportunity in many cities and counties for up-and-coming talent to develop new skills and experiences in assistant and deputy positions. In fact, career assistants who have no desire to move up to a chief executive position often, in practice, block the upward mobility of younger talent.

Moreover, many managers resist requests made by up-and-coming talent to change their titles to "deputy manager" or "deputy department director," even when the title changes would not result in additional compensation. In tough financial times, many organizations have also cut funds for professional development and training and internships of all kinds. Senior managers often feel so overwhelmed with demands from all quarters that coaching and mentoring aspiring managers drop off their to-do lists.

Other barriers. Summit attendees noted a variety of

A significant number of local governments have created hostile or toxic cultures and work environments. Councils do not sufficiently recognize that candidates make career decisions based on the reputations of the recruiting organizations. Simply put, potential candidates for city and county manager positions do not perceive adequate compensation and other rewards for these jobs.

other obstacles to filling the top jobs in local government, including incompatible retirement systems from state to state and the high cost of living in many otherwise desirable urban areas.

Current Reactions to the Talent Crisis

Councils and their contract recruiters have already begun to react to the talent crisis. First of all, recruiters perceive what one summit participant dubbed the "Dick Vermeil/Joe Gibbs phenomenon." Councils and other governing boards are now resorting to bringing in a retired "old pro" for two to three years to fill critical executive positions.

Second, localities are being forced to take bigger risks on younger, more inexperienced candidates, from inside or outside the organizations, than have traditionally held the positions.

Third, to enlarge the pool of senior management talent, councils and other governing boards have become more open to nontraditional candidates from the ranks of business, the military, women, and multicultural groups. (One recruiter acknowledged that some councils "talk a good game" about diverse candidates yet may still resist minority candidates in spite of the mid- to long-term need to use their talents.) As one participant indicated, recruiting nontraditional candidates is no longer a nice thing to do; it's a "business necessity."

Executive Recruiter Firms Participating in The Summit

- Alliance Resource Consulting
- Avery Associates
- Bennett Yarger Associates
- Bob Murray & Associates
- Brimeyer Group
- CPS Executive Search
- Peckham & McKenney
- Slavin Management Consultants

- The Hawkins Company
- The Mercer Group
- The Mills Group
- The Oldani Group
- The PAR Group
- The Waters Consulting Group
- Waldron & Company

Next-Generation Strategies

To move beyond these immediate reactions to antici-pate the new market realities, the attending recruiters recommended a number of next-generation strategies:

1. Workforce planning and talent development. As organizations increasingly rely on internal candi-dates, local governments must engage in succession planning. In addition to attracting young workers to replenish and reenergize their organizations through paid and unpaid internships, local governments need to identify up-and-coming talent and engage these candidates in leadership academies, special assignments and "action learning" within and across departments, talent exchanges, and interim posi-tions whereby they can acquire line and management experience. Some recruiters stressed the need to better develop defined career paths leading to senior management positions and, in that effort, to broaden job descriptions so that aspiring managers can su-pervise others and take on new project assignments. Senior managers, of course, must take some risks and tolerate more mistakes, or there will be no growth for younger employees.

2. Educating governing boards. While raising the consciousness of councils and other governing boards is a responsibility for everyone in the local govern-ment management profession, executive recruiters—as outside third parties—can play a critical role in "educating their clients." This role should consist of elevating the awareness of council and board mem-bers about:

- The replacement-talent crisis.
- The need to consider younger talent and take bigger risks.
- The need to consider nontraditional candidates, espe-cially people of color and different cultures.
- The requirement that organizations, especially their top managers, focus on talent development and suc-cession planning.
- The most critical need for councils and boards to fix their negative cultures and improve over time their reputations so they can attract and retain talent.

Recruiters at the summit suggested that the Na-tional League of Cities and the state leagues can also play a role in educating councils on new market reali-ties and on what they need to do in response to these market imperatives.

3. Promoting the rewards and joys of the top jobs. Several recruiters emphasized that managers and other

ICMA's Next-Generation Initiative: Elements

1. Research Into the Next-Generation Challenge
What Can Be Done? Attracting Young People to Careers in Local Government Management (2002) is a research study documenting that young people fail to consider local government careers because they don't know anything about the field. Go to www.icma/org/pm/8501.

Building the Next Generation of Leaders in Fed-eral, State, and Local Government (to be released in 2005), a research project, uses case studies to explore innovative approaches to building the leadership pipeline at local, state and federal levels, as well as to examine the impacts of these leadership preparation programs.

2. The Guidebook
Preparing the Next Generation: A Guide for Current and Future Local Government Managers (2003) is a resource book that dissects the talent crisis facing local government, promotes self-devel-opment strategies for aspiring managers, and provides best practices for senior managers in developing the next generation. The guide is available free of charge at http://jobs.icma.org; click on "Preparing the Next Generation" under the "Resources" menu bar.

3. The Cal-ICMA Coaching Program
Sponsored by Cal-ICMA, the coaching program consists of telephone panels of senior manag-ers addressing leadership and career develop-ment issues; small-group coaching sessions over the telephone for first-time chief executives (or those who are applying for these positions); one-to-one matches between senior managers and up-and-comers; and networking events for aspiring managers conducted by area manager groups. ICMA will take the lead in helping other state associations replicate this coaching-pro-gram model. For more information, go to www.cal-icma.org, and click on "Coaching Corner."

4. Local Government Management Fellows
Cosponsored by ICMA, NFBPA, NASPAA, and the International Hispanic Network, this fellow-ship program attracts the best and the brightest among recent master's program graduates. Each fellow is placed in a full-time, management-track position under the guidance of a designated mentor. The first pilot year, 2004, led to the funding and placement of six fellows with the

senior personnel need to promote the benefits, rewards, and joys of their jobs. One attendee noted that managers spend too much time telling "war stories" and complaining at conferences and meetings about their councils, their staffs, and their constituents.

Chief executives do enjoy the everyday challenges of their jobs, the chance to create and enhance community, and the daily opportunities to make a difference. (In fact, those managers engaged in the Cal-

program, which is slated to expand in 2005. The

Continued from previous page

2004 LGMF program also led to a partnership with Ohio's Wittenberg University to promote an undergraduate internship program under the LGMF program umbrella. For more information, visit the Web site at www.localintern.org.

5. The Emerging Leaders Program

Since many aspiring mid-career managers do not qualify for the ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program or for education programs targeted for credentialed managers, ICMA will launch an Emerging Leaders Program in 2005 that will provide specially tailored educational and professional development opportunities for up-and-coming talent.

6. Public Service Fairs

In the past two years, ICMA and NFBPA have promoted local government management careers at four university public service fairs in different locations across the United States. Sponsored by the Public Policy and International Affairs Program, these fairs offered university students an opportunity to interact with local government managers at information booths and workshops.

7. Annual Conference Scholarships

ICMA offers women and minorities who are beginning their careers in local government, as well as graduate students in public administration, financial assistance to attend the annual conference.

8. The "Next Generation" Web Site

In 2005, ICMA plans to launch a "Next Generation" Web site devoted to students, young professionals, and senior managers who want to reach out and support these next-generation groups. The Web site will list job, internship, and scholarship opportunities and related resources.

For more information, contact Michele Frisby at ICMA (mfrisby@icma.org).

ICMA Coaching Program sessions have often stated that they enjoy the program because it gives them an opportunity to reflect on the nature of their profession and the joys of serving.)

If managers want a legacy of talented younger professionals to follow in their footsteps, they must play a marketing and public awareness role in promoting the rewards of the work and telling how they themselves have achieved fulfilling lives. Managers need to take personal responsibility as individuals, as well as work through ICMA as the Association and its members promote the profession.

Role of Executive Recruiters

What can recruiters do as individuals and as a group, by themselves or in collaboration with ICMA and state associations? The discussion and the survey completed during the summit by the recruiters suggested a number of roles.

First, in addition to educating their clients (i.e., governing boards), recruiters need to be more visible among the next generation of senior managers. They can speak at the conferences and meetings of assistants and other local governmental groups, publicize the rising demand for mid-career professionals to replace baby-boomer senior managers, critique résumés and interviewing techniques of up-and-comers in workshops or one-on-one sessions, and generally encourage aspiring managers to contact them. (It was noted that younger professionals do not contact recruiters and ask for support or assistance, even though recruiters are constantly looking for new talent.)

Second, recruiters are well suited to serve on coaching-program panels like those organized by Cal-ICMA with city and county managers and to discuss leadership and career development topics.

Third, recruiters can partner with managers and assistants in reaching out to universities and promoting local government careers in classes and at career fairs.

Fourth, executive recruiters have a business stake in preparing the next generation. Without up-and-coming talent, they have little to sell to local government. Consequently, recruiters need to invest in ICMA's next generation initiative. For instance, CPS Executive Search recently invested $60,000 over three years to help fund and enhance the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program and to help replicate it in other states through ICMA. Bill Avery Associates has just invested $20,000 in the Management Talent Exchange Program, which offers aspiring managers in Santa Clara and San Mateo counties in California an opportunity to develop new skills and relationships in another local government by participating in a three-month exchange. Other firms need to look at next-generation programs as business investment opportunities.

Next Steps

As follow-up measures responding to the executive recruiter summit, ICMA, as well as Cal-ICMA and other state associations, will:

- Secure wider participation by recruiters in the Preparing the Next Generation Committee in California as it tests and models next-generation strategies.

- Engage more recruiters in program sessions at conferences sponsored by ICMA and state associations, as well as next-generation committees at the national and state levels.

- Involve recruiters in coaching panels, small-group coaching sessions, and other coaching programs.

- Solicit financial investments in specific next-generation programs from those recruiting firms that have indicated an interest; involve these firms as partners in the design and delivery of the programs.

- Involve recruiters in developing the curriculum for credentialed managers and the upcoming ICMA program for "emerging leaders."

- Host Summit II at the 2005 ICMA conference in Minneapolis. The summit will update recruiting firms on the progress of the ICMA Next Generation initiative, highlight partnerships with recruiting firms, and plan additional collaborative efforts.

Frank Benest is city manager of Palo Alto, California. He serves as cochair of the Preparing the Next Generation Committee in California. Send inquiries about the summit to him at 250 Hamilton Avenue, Palo Alto, California 94301-2531; telephone, 650-329-2563; e-mail, frank.benest@cityof paloalto.org.

Building Solid Links between Managers and Academics

by Rex Facer II and Bradley Owens

D uring the past several years, ICMA's Advisory Board on Graduate Education has focused on several issues. In many ways, the overarching focus of the advisory board has been related to ICMA's Next Generation initiative. The advisory board is working on such issues as internships, attracting students to the profession, and encouraging managers to enter the classroom as adjunct faculty.

Central to these efforts has been the committee that the board established to examine relationships between managers and the academic community. Anecdotally, the committee has heard stories of efforts to engage universities but with little response. There has been a longstanding relationship, however, between the advisory board and the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA). Specifically, members of the NASPAA Local Government Management Education Committee meet regularly with practicing managers who serve on the ICMA Advisory Board on Graduate Education.

Through discussions held over the past several years, the ICMA and NASPAA groups decided it would be useful to gain a better understanding of what was actually happening out in the trenches. In this regard, we focused on state associations of managers, to find out how these organizations interact with academic institutions.

In summer 2004, we sent out a survey to gather this kind of information, and we hope that the results of the survey will prove helpful in generating ideas for management associations that are trying to build relations and to cooperate more fully with local university public administration programs. This article reports on the findings of the survey.

The Survey

With the assistance of ICMA staff, we collected contact information for all presidents of state associations of local government managers. An online survey to facilitate data collection was devised. In developing the survey, we held discussions with ICMA staff, members of the advisory board, and others who are familiar with the activities of state associations.

We sent an e-mail invitation to all association presidents. Two follow-up e-mails also were sent, encouraging participation in the survey. Out of 53 invitations, we received 20 completed surveys, a response rate of 38 percent.

Results

Mission statements. Our first task was to identify the mission of each state association. This open-ended question allowed us to understand the degree to which interaction between local universities and the management association would help accomplish the organization's purposes.

Two responses explicitly addressed issues directly connected with universities. The first such mission statement articulated that the state association's purpose is to "prepare the next generation of local government managers [and] encourage them to select local government as a career."

The other state association indicated that one of its major purposes is "to serve as a municipal government resource to the academic community." While these aims were not always explicitly stated, most mission statements included purposes that local universities could help accomplish. For example,

61 percent of mission statements indicated that professional development was a key aim of their organizations; 33 percent of mission statements focused on promoting professional local government management.

Linking with local university public administration programs may be a valuable way to strengthen professional values and practices, particularly for those people just starting their careers. These young professionals can thereby start early to nurture and develop their careers and their views of local government management as a profession.

As one respondent said, the association-university link enables the association to provide students with "timely educational opportunities"—timely because the professional training is offered early, when an assistant or a new local government manager may be most receptive.

These educational efforts also serve practicing managers. Thirty-nine percent of the mission statements emphasized their purposes of providing 1) continuing education for managers within the state, and 2) the "exchange of the latest developments of municipal management." For organizations focused on the continued development and education of their members, an alliance and involvement with public administration programs facilitates transmission of the latest research and newest developments from the academic setting to a setting where these developments may be put to practical use.

In addition to educational efforts, organizations also focus on facilitating "networking among local government administrators" (28 percent of responding organizations), "networking" (28 percent of respondents), and "enhancing the quality of local government management" (17 percent).

Conferences. One major opportunity for interaction between state associations and academic institutions is through association meetings or conferences. Accordingly, we asked association presidents to reflect on their conferences. Of the associations that responded, 84 percent hold annual conferences.

Fifty-six percent of these associations involve local university members as presenters, and 44 percent involve local universities in the development of the conference program. As discussed below, some associations award students conference scholarships to cover the expenses of attending the annual association conference. Other associations waive the registra-

tion fee or offer students a discounted fee to encourage them to attend meetings.

Some associations also hold their meetings at local college campuses. For example, the Utah City Managers Association (UCMA) annually holds a one-day winter conference in addition to its annual meetings. UCMA partners with Brigham Young University (BYU) and the University of Utah (UUtah) to host the conference.

BYU and UUtah alternate hosting the winter meeting. Holding the meeting on campus facilitates students' attendance and increases their interaction with current managers. University faculty regularly make presentations at these meetings. At the last UCMA winter meeting, for example, BYU faculty addressed attendees on leadership and ethics, the theme of that conference.

Some state associations use public administration students in their conference planning and administration. This gives the students a chance to become active and involved in the association early, which increases the likelihood that they will continue to participate actively in the association after graduating and starting their careers.

> State associations of managers should consider building strong alliances with local universities. These links offer valuable benefits to association members as they interact with public administration students and faculty.

Scholarships. State associations seek to encourage students' educations by sponsoring scholarships for students preparing for local government management careers. Forty-seven percent of responding associations offer some type of scholarship to students. These range from tuition awards to conference scholarships to a fund for a student's attendance at an association's annual conference.

Tuition scholarships range from "several hundred dollars" to $4,500. Of the organizations that sponsor scholarships, almost half have been doing so for more than 10 years, and one-third of these organizations have added new scholarship offerings within the past five years. Fifty-six percent of scholarship-sponsoring organizations offer between two and seven scholarships.

Offering scholarships allows management associations to recognize and honor excellent students in public administration programs while it sends a message to students that such associations exist to be supportive and helpful resources for administrators. It also enables the association to entice capable graduate students to carefully consider careers in local government management.

Sponsoring scholarships to cover the cost of attending conferences facilitates more networking opportu-

nities for students, which in turn aids them in finding internships and jobs.

Other initiatives. In addition to annual conferences and scholarships, state associations are involved in many other activities linking themselves to universities. From a student's perspective, perhaps the most important linkage involves work opportunities.

Twenty-one percent of state associations indicated on our survey that their organizations serve as internship clearinghouses. Thirty-five percent promote activities or programs to help students find jobs. More than one-third of state associations (38 percent) involve local universities in the administration of their organizations.

While most of the survey questions focused on activities that we knew associations were doing, we did seek information on other activities linking managers and universities. Respondents indicated that several kinds of activities existed. For example, one state association indicated that it works closely with a local university in developing training programs and conducting research.

Another association holds summits or panels on campus. Another state association routinely invites professors from the local university to speak at its monthly meetings. In all, associations can and do look to public administration programs and their faculties for a range of support and services.

Positive Conclusion

Overall, state associations perceive a positive value in the alliance between associations of managers and local universities. One typical respondent noted that its alliance with a local public administration graduate program served to "boost membership, link members to potential interns, [and] encourage members to seek advanced degrees."

Not only do these links between management associations and universities help students to become interested in the field, but they also help members of the associations to strive for lifelong learning. Another typical responding organization indicated that its involvement with a university helps boost association membership, providing an important "support base for new and longtime members."

State associations of managers should consider building strong alliances with local universities. These links offer valuable benefits to association members as they interact with public administration students and faculty. These alliances can help accomplish the organizations' missions by boosting association membership and participation and by promoting the professionalism of local government management.

Rex Facer II is an assistant professor of public management at the George W. Romney Institute of Public Management at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (rfacer@byu.edu). He serves on the NASPAA Local Government Management Education Committee and on ICMA's Advisory Board for Local Government Education.

Bradley Owens received an MPA from BYU's Romney Institute and is currently pursuing a doctorate at the University of Washington in Seattle (bradowens2008@yahoo.com).

Advisory Board on Graduate Education

The goal of ICMA's Advisory Board on Graduate Education is to work with members of the academic community to improve the graduate education of future local government professionals. To do this, it works with the Local Government Management Education Committee of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) on:

- Strengthening relationships between managers' associations and the academic community, which is the subject of this article.

- Encouraging and supporting managers who serve as adjunct faculty with a listserv, a Web site, and other resources (see "Resources for Instructors" on the right-hand menu of ICMA's online bookstore at http://bookstore.icma.org).

- Strengthening internships for students (see "Internship Guidelines" under "Resources" on the left-hand menu of the ICMA JobCenter: http://jobs.icma.org).

Succession Planning: An Idea Whose Time Has Come

by Patrick Ibarra

A great many members of ICMA grew up playing music on vinyl, wearing bell-bottom jeans, and thinking car phones were a sign of affluence. They are, of course, the members of the baby boomer generation, which covers persons born between the years 1945 and 1964. Trends, fads, and styles all come and go, but one thing is certain: the upcoming "brain drain" of a large number of retiring employees in upper and middle management positions, mostly baby boomers, will be chilling.

About 80 percent of senior and middle managers in the federal government are eligible for retirement now. The percentage of those eligible for retirement in state and local governments is unknown, but it is expected to be alarmingly high. In fact, 46.3 percent of government workers are aged 45 or older. Compared with the private sector, where just 31.2 percent are 45 years old and older, this fact indicates that the government sector is at the forefront of this trend.

There are those presenters and authors who believe that the talent wars of the late 1990s, before the dot-bombed, are over and done with. Not so fast! By the year 2010, the United States will have 10 million more jobs than skilled workers to fill them. Along with the "brain drain," this projection demonstrates the urgency with which local governments must begin to systematically replace talent, as a way of sustaining the performance of their organizations.

The most popular and effective approach is succession planning, which contributes to an organization's continued survival and success by ensuring that replacements have been prepared to fill key vacancies on short notice, that individuals have been groomed to assume greater responsibility, and that they have been prepared to increase their proficiency in their work.

Some observers bandy about the notion that the systematic, mass exodus of seasoned professionals will simply be a minor blip on the radar screen. They speculate that many of those employees who will retire will return as contract employees and that no disruption in service will be noticed. A risky assumption, and a clear message to your still-working employees that promotional opportunities will be limited.

Identifying and developing the best people for key leadership roles is basic to future organizational success. To ensure that success is indeed continued, organizational leaders:

- Need the excellent performance in their organizations preserved, if not enhanced.
- Need important leadership positions identified.
- Want to strengthen individual advancement.
- Want to have the right leaders prepared for the right positions at the needed time.

Today, succession planning requires more than just an organization chart that shows who holds what job within the local government. Best practice organizations use succession planning to develop and maintain strong leadership and to ensure that they address all the competencies required for today's and tomorrow's work environment.

Best practice examples include Henrico County, Virginia; Anaheim, California; and Phoenix, Arizona, the latter two having implemented an extensive strategy to develop the next generation of leaders and home-grown talent. In practice, these cases exemplify the principle that effective planning engages managers at all levels of the organization and is not just another HR-driven initiative.

Your Organization

Effective organizations do not passively wait for the future; they create it by investing their time, thoughts, and planning to ensure the continuity of their talent, both their leaders and their front-line employees. An excellent first step toward the adoption of a succession planning process, and a method that will truly reveal your own organization's situation with respect to the aging of the workforce, is to collect data.

Use Figure 1 as an indicated worksheet on which to enter the number of employees in each of the categories listed. You may want to consider adding another column for the age group of 45–49, especially for police and fire personnel, since many of these employees may be eligible for retirement at 50 years of age.

Gathering and analyzing these types of data (a process often referred to as workforce analytics) will permit your jurisdiction to grasp the current situation and begin to recognize its significance. You may want to take the analysis one step further to a more "micro" level, by job classification, for example. These types of solid data can be used to convince others, like senior executives and policymakers, not only of the gravity of the situation but also, more important, of the fact that resources must be provided to address it.

Unfortunately, planning for succession is often overlooked or occurs when it is too late, after key people have left the organization and no internal candidates remain to fill the leadership positions. If your organization executes succession planning correctly, it will have fully prepared front-line and management staff to step into positions left vacant because of retirement and general attrition.

It is imperative to recognize that the process of establishing systematic succession planning is the equivalent of making a long-term culture change. It can be a major shift in an organization whose decisionmakers have been accustomed to filling one vacancy at a time. Succession planning requires a commitment to a longer-term, strategic view of talent needs, and it features these benefits:

- Having identified leadership "bench strength" in place. This will help the jurisdiction meet both long-term and emergency leadership needs at all levels.

- Ensuring continuity of management.

- Growing your own leaders. This practice sends a positive message throughout your workforce. Promoting people from within is good for morale and essential to a positive organizational culture. People will want to join and stay with your organization because it develops its own people. And promoting from within is consistent with an empowerment philosophy that encourages people to take on responsibility, assume risks, measure outcomes, and grow through their achievements.

- Clarifying a sense of each internal candidate's strengths and opportunities for improvement, as well as offering access to more and better data on that person's performance than you would have with outside candidates. In this way, you will be able to make more informed and accurate selection decisions.

- Helping to align human resources with the strategic directions of the organization.

How to Implement Succession Planning

The primary task of succession planning is to outline a sequence of personnel moves so that candidates for key positions are known in advance of actual need. Several factors are present in many city and county organizations that are barriers to effective succession planning, including:

Figure 1. Attrition Data and Retirement Projections: A Worksheet

Department	Total Number of Employees	Age 50–54	Age 55–59	Age 60+	Total 50–60+
Administration					
Clerk					
Community Services					
Finance					
Fire					
Human Resources					
Human Services					
Police					
Public Utilities					
Public Works Department					
Other					
Totals					

- The assumption that your employees' retirement options are a don't-ask, don't-tell issue.

- The perception that predetermining the best candidate for a position resembles favoritism.

- The principle of seniority as the primary factor in promotions in both union and nonunion environments. An agency that uses time in grade (i.e., seniority) as its fundamental criterion for getting ahead is encouraging organizational hardening of the arteries.

Realizing that these factors might be embedded in your particular organization, you should assess each and establish a consensus in favor of minimizing its influence. One option to consider is revising policies or negotiating new terms in collective bargaining agreements for all newly hired employees after a particular date. While not generating short-term results, this approach will bring structural, long-term benefits that unbind the hands of future leaders.

A comprehensive strategy for instituting succession planning involves a series of strategies and tactics that, together, make up an overall project plan. After completing the attrition data and retirement projection analysis intended to reveal your level of need for succession planning (as shown in Figure 1), your organization would do well to execute eight steps as part of this project plan (see Figure 2).

Involved in each of the eight steps are several sequential actions. Choosing only those actions that are the easiest to implement or most politically expedient, so-called cherrypicking, is discouraged, as it can lead to a fragmented process and less-than-optimum results.

Briefly described, here are the eight steps:

1. **Assess future service needs.** A strategic plan identifies current and future priorities that are the essence of building a succession plan. Frequently, organizations concentrate their short- and long-term planning processes on capital improvements, and occasionally on operations, without fully integrating the impacts on the development needs of the employees responsible for delivering the services. A strategic plan, when adopted, is powerful, as it outlines how the organization will reach the measurable goals and objectives that support its mission and vision, both of which should be driving forces in the more traditional capital-improvements planning process.

2. **Identify critical positions and high-potential employees.** Critical positions are those that are essential for the organization, department, division, work unit, or team to achieve the necessary work results. A high-potential employee is someone who has the capability to advance to one of the following: 1) a critical position; 2) a higher level of responsibility; or 3) a higher level of technical proficiency. This identification step should be completed at the department level by senior management and by the executive management team for the entire organization.

3. **Identify competencies.** A subject that generates its own quota of concern and frustration is that of job descriptions and the continued effort to revise them so they reflect today's workplace. As an alternative, a jurisdiction could slowly phase out job descriptions with their often-narrow sets of duties and tasks that in the wrong hands become shields, and instead move toward the use of competencies that

Figure 2. Succession Planning: A Project Plan
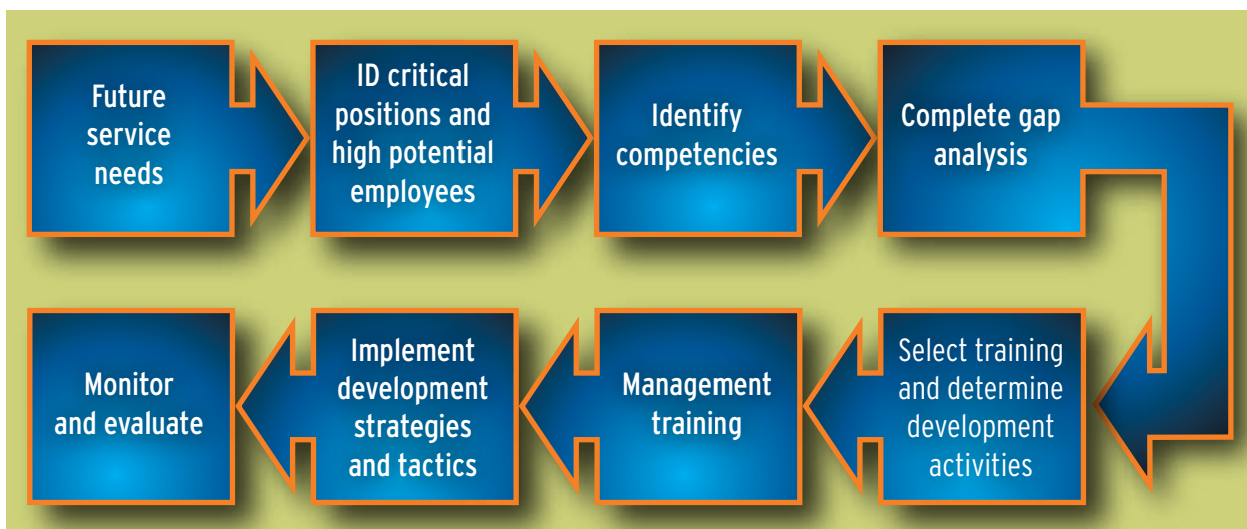
cut across job classifications, departments, and even organizational boundaries. Examples of competencies include coaching, decisionmaking, initiating action, managing conflict, and tenacity. Competencies should be integrated into the organization's performance management system, into training and development, and into the compensation system. The point of identifying competencies as part of succession planning is to choose those abilities that are necessary for today's and tomorrow's workplace.

4. Do a complete gap analysis. Conduct a gap analysis to determine the existence or extent of a gap in the competencies for each position.

5. Select training and development activities. A variety of resources is available for individuals and groups to close the gaps and build stronger competencies in employees (see Figure 3).

While training can be an effective solution, there tends to be an overreliance on it in many organizations, a belief that it's the unequivocal "silver bullet." Many areas in which employees need to improve their capabilities cannot be solved by a training workshop but can instead be enhanced through such means as on-the-job coaching, rotation of assignments, and task force assignments, to name a few. This step of the succession planning process provides for the selection and design of these development strategies.

Frank Benest, city manager of Palo Alto, California, along with the California League of Cities and ICMA, has undertaken an aggressive approach to developing the next round of local government professionals. Frank served as editor for the development of ICMA's *Preparing the Next Generation* resource guide, which discusses several effective strategies designed at building capabilities.

Beyond the employee development and training options available, a range of solutions should be considered during this stage of the succession plan, including recruitment and selection, retention, and organizational interventions like process improvement, structure/possible reorganization, and measurement systems.

6. Conduct management training. Managers should participate in training focused on augmenting the skills and expanding the knowledge necessary to develop the talent of their direct reports. They should fully engage in the agency's succession plan. As a contributor to succession planning, each manager must work in concert with others in the organization to do the following: identify key replacement needs and the high-potential people and critical positions to include in the succession plan; clarify present and future work activities and work results; compare present individual performance and future individual potential; and establish individual development plans (IDPs) to prepare replacements and develop high-potential employees.

7. Implement development strategies and tactics. Managers ought to determine when strategies

Figure 3. Employee Development Strategies

should be implemented, but before they begin implementation, they should communicate the plan to all employees. Use the intranet, payroll stuffers, large group/town hall meetings, and labor/management committees as means to communicate the varied aspects of the succession plan and its accompanying benefits. Be sure to obtain feedback from employees to determine how well the communication plan is working.

8. **Monitor and evaluate.** Once local government managers have implemented their succession plans, they should monitor progress, evaluate the implementation, and revise their plans as needed. Review progress at predetermined times and include components like the program schedule and interim results.

A Case Study

Recently, a local government that was experiencing unprecedented growth also recognized the pending "brain drain" that would place the organization at a critical juncture. Its need for seasoned professional staff members had never been greater yet the trend showed that these organizational members were the ones most likely to be leaving in the near future. The locality's past efforts at succession planning had been inconsistent, and it was interested in adopting a prescribed methodology.

No one involved presumed that the need for succession planning was realized equally by each member of the senior management team. Therefore,

it was decided that two off-site meetings of the senior managers would be the forum at which to introduce the concept of succession planning and to adopt its implementation.

To address possible reservations by key decision-makers about the perceived need for this kind of planning, a segment of the first off-site meeting contained exercises to reveal data on pertinent trends, to draw out the different perspectives held by managers, and to discuss them constructively and candidly. Some of these exercises were:

· "What-if" scenario planning, with ministudies designed to illustrate the need for succession planning within each department.

· A brief questionnaire about succession planning efforts within the organization.

· Review and discussion of the benefits of systematic succession planning and of the components necessary to implement it.

· Identification and discussion of the forces driving and barriers preventing the undertaking of succession planning.

· Decision making among group members to choose which barriers to succession planning should be resolved.

The outcome of this first meeting was a strong consensus about the urgent need to start succession planning.

Figure 4. Essential Components of Succession Plans

Component	What Is It?	What Purpose Does It Serve?
Replacement chart	An organization chart that depicts internal successors for each critical position in the organization.	Shows possible internal successors for each critical position, describes how ready they are to replace the key job incumbent, and predicts how long it will likely take to prepare each successor for advancement.
Critical-position profile	Similar to a job description, a critical-position profile is a list typically written on a single page.	Lists key responsibilities, duties, and activities for each critical position in the organization.
High-potential profile	Similar to a résumé, a high-potential profile is usually written on a single page and lists important biographical information about the key job incumbent and any individuals identified on replacement charts as a possible successor.	Lists an individual's education, work experience, performance rating, career goals (when possible), and other important work-related information that has a bearing on advancement potential and/or present performance.
Employee performance appraisal	Rates the individual's performance on their present job. (Advancement usually depends on an employee's performing at least competently on their present job.)	Assesses an individual's present work performance.
Individual potential assessment	Rates the individual's potential for advancement, either to one critically important position or to higher levels of responsibility or technical proficiency.	Assesses an individual's potential for advancement or for exercising increased assessment technical proficiency in their current position.
Individual development plans (IDPs)	A plan to narrow the developmental gap between what the individual currently knows or does on their current job and what they need to know or do to advance to a future, critically important position or to a higher level of responsibility.	Although individuals are sometimes promoted on the strength of their performance on a previous job, an IDP assumes that higher-level positions demand special preparation. An IDP, though usually updated annually, is typically long-term (covering several years) and may include various training and work assignment requirements to help an individual qualify for a succession, achieve a higher level of responsibility, or exercise increased technical proficiency.

Building on the work of the first meeting, the purpose of the second meeting was to draft a succession planning program and to assemble an oversight task force to monitor its implementation. The work completed at this second meeting resulted in:

- A draft succession planning program, including steps, milestones, and responsible parties.

- Securing of management commitment. Succession planning will be effective only when it enjoys support from its stakeholders, and obtaining and building management commitment to such planning is essential before a systematic program can work.

- Assembly of an oversight task force composed of a cross-section of employees and positions. This body is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the succession plan and ensuring that succession planning maintains its proper visibility within the organization. The task force also demonstrates to the city or county organization that succession planning is not strictly an initiative of the human resources department.

The outcome was a robust and well-crafted succession plan, fully supported by executives.

Key Points to Remember

Several critical elements required for effective succession planning in your organization are:

- A commitment by the city or county manager and senior managers, and alignment with organizational strategy.

- Full use of the eight-step approach (as illustrated in Figure 2).

- Competency models that serve as a blueprint for high-performers now and in future.

- A functioning performance management system that measures individuals against the competency models.

- Assessment methods that measure how well prepared an individual is to assume additional, or specialized, responsibility.

- An individual development planning process that helps to narrow 1) the present gap between current competencies and current performance, and 2) the future gap between future competencies needed and potential.

- Employee development and training strategies that are aligned with building the competencies necessary to achieve organizational results.

- A measurement method that assesses how well the overall succession program is functioning over time.

To determine the current state of your organization's succession planning efforts, visit www.getting betterallthetime.com, and download *Succession Planning: Where Are We?*—a free, 20-question self-assessment tool.

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Patrick Ibarra (patrick@gettingbetterallthetime.com) is cofounder and partner, Mejorando Group, Phoenix, Arizona. He is a former city manager.

The Retirement Epidemic: Recruiting Young People into Public Service

by Zachariah Friend

Local government management is at a crossroads. States and localities are troubled by the high number of retiring managers and the relatively low number of young professionals looking to take their places.

Many top-level people are opting for early retirement. In fact, the General Accounting Office reports that 53 percent of middle and upper public sector managers nationwide will qualify for retirement sometime this year.

A lot of young professionals and recent graduates, however, are eager to break into the public sector. Why the paradox?

Public sector employers—specifically, local and state governments—are not as aggressive at pursuing and recruiting these talented prospects as their counterparts in the private sector. Could it be that these talented candidates are missing out on management careers simply because they are unaware that the opportunity exists?

There is some good news. According to a sampling of five member universities of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) in Washington, D.C., students are applying to public administration, public policy, and public affairs programs at significantly higher rates than in the past. A recent survey of college seniors made on behalf of the Center for Public Service at The Brookings Institution, Washington, D.C., found that 19 percent of the seniors had given serious consideration to a job in state or local government.

Joe Ferrara, a professor at the Georgetown Public Policy Institute, Washington, D.C., believes that local governments are missing the boat by not aggressively reaching out to young men and women interested in public service. "Local governments need to take action on several fronts to recruit the next generation of public managers," he says.

Professor Ferrara believes that local governments should "establish a positive and energetic presence at campus job fairs" while "streamlining the application and hiring process." The professor believes that prevailing opinions of the government hiring process may dissuade students from even considering public service. The Center for Public Service found similar information in its survey (see the accompanying table). A recent review of on-campus recruiters at the University of Michigan and Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., found that the vast majority were from the private sector. No local governments were represented. Jane Miller, director of student affairs at Michigan State's School of Public Policy, suggests that many localities rely on their Web sites to advertise postings.

The private sector, however, dedicates recruiting and marketing positions to reaching students. While the majority of graduates from the public policy programs at Michigan State and the University of Michigan enter the public sector, nearly all of them bypass local government.

How can local governments change this trend and attract their fair share of graduating students? One answer is to start early. Laura Hogan, a graduate student at the University of Maryland's School of Public Affairs, believes her interest in government came from early exposure to the benefits of public service. "You cannot start early enough introducing children to the wonders of government," she says.

Figure 1. Views of the Hiring Process

Attribute	Government	Nonprofit	Contractor
Simple	30%	69%	52%
Fast	14%	56%	52%

N = 1,002

Source: Paul C. Light, Center for Public Service, The Brookings Institution, June 2003.

"We live in a society that welcomes citizen participation, " she adds, "and we need to empower children to celebrate the duties of citizenship and fully partake in our government." She believes that the easiest way to do this at the local level is to invite students to council meetings and to visit local schools.

Another technique is to work more closely with local universities to encourage the teaching of a local government curriculum. Alexandra Michael, a graduate student at George Washington University's School of Business and Public Management, claims that most graduate programs do not focus enough on local government management. "Graduate programs, working in conjunction with local governments, could incorporate local issues into policy realms where they interact, such as budgeting and environmental issues. It would be helpful to have more professors, guest lecturers, and recruiters from local governments to help bridge the knowledge gap."

Placing front-line city officials in the classroom is integral to addressing the dearth of local issues taught by most public administration and public policy programs. Wendy Kaserman, of the League of Arizona Cities and Towns, believes that it is critical to include practitioners in these programs to build a local government curriculum. "The theory is important, but the work that city and county managers do requires skill sets that I feel are best taught by people working in the field, versus academicians," she says.

Bo Ferguson, assistant to the city manager in Rockville, Maryland, says that local governments could do more outreach to students in public administration. "The media will continue to cover the more sensational aspects of government and its shortcomings. So we have to try harder at the local government level to tell the good stories about the great job that local government is doing everyday. Public administration students should be exposed to the people and organizations that they will soon work for and someday lead."

> Keeping the key concept of outreach in mind, local governments can easily replace retiring managers with the next generation of public employees.

This is something that is successfully being done in Arizona. Wendy Kaserman claims, "The professors in the public administration programs frequently invite city and town management staff to come speak to classes on a variety of issues affecting local government." However, while she feels that Arizona localities have been successful in outreach to public administration students, outreach efforts should be broadened to include students of all academic pursuits. "Not only will we need more city and county managers in the future, [but] we will also need people to fill management positions at the department level."

The localities that do actively recruit young people have ended up recruiting full-time employees. David Moore, manager of the community development program for the city of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, came back to work for his hometown after obtaining his degree. "I was lucky enough to be given a chance by a manager who understood the importance of reaching out to young people interested in the field. Managers and administrators can play a huge part in encouraging individuals to commit to this rewarding career."

Now, as a young professional, he has found young people to be extremely receptive to a career in public service. "I have always been encouraged by the reaction I have received when I speak with school-aged kids about what goes into running cities and towns. They really do grasp the necessity and utility of government. For many kids, it is exciting to learn about who maintains, creates, and plans for the institutions that shape their childhood."

Some communities might be fearful of the costs, in staff time and direct outlays, associated with beginning an internship program. However, Michael Young, city manager of Rockford, Michigan, believes that these costs are negligible in the bigger picture. "I would contend that the costs associated with paying an intern are minimal compared to the benefits that a community can receive. I would also say that the benefit to a community in placing an intern far outweighs the time in developing the internship structure. If done correctly, the development of an internship is a onetime expenditure of energy, which then simply needs to be tweaked and modified, year in and year out."

If your local government wants to recruit the next generation of bright, creative candidates, it should consider taking some simple steps.

Seven Steps

Here are seven simple solutions to recruiting young managers:

1. **Use outreach!** Public managers need to actively recruit students. They can attend school job fairs, guest-lecture in classes, and send job postings to university career representatives.

2. **Work with local universities to offer fellowships, weekend academies, or training certificates.** Some cities, such as Long Beach, California, and Phoenix, Arizona, have successfully established fellowship programs that recruit and retain top-level young professionals.

3. **Offer internships.** Work with local universities and high schools to offer credit-based internship programs for students. Results from the Center for Public Service study show that students who have participated in a local government volunteer or intern program are significantly more likely to consider local government careers.

4. **Offer job shadowing and mentor programs for high school students.** Starting early to reach students is essential. Many high school students are beginning to formulate their career paths and would welcome the active recruitment of local governments.

5. **Appoint a student task force.** Encourage local university and high school students to provide input on city and county issues that directly affect them. Allow students to participate actively in community meetings and in policy formulation for issues they care about.

6. **Work with state officials to develop partial tuition-reimbursement incentives.** Commonly, the private sector provides graduate tuition in exchange for a certain number of years of service to a company. The arrival of this idea in the public sector is long overdue.

7. **Use existing resources.** ICMA offers to local governments an *Internship Toolkit* that gives an overview of how to start a meaningful internship program. Conventions and local government forums like the ICMA annual conference are excellent ways to introduce young professionals to the benefits of public service. And localities would benefit from participating in establishing such fellowship initiatives as the Local Management Fellowship Program sponsored by NASPAA, ICMA, NFBPA, and the Hispanic Network.

The burdens soon to be caused by the departure of so many of retiring managers can be turned into opportunities. Keeping the key concept of outreach in mind, local governments can more easily replace retiring managers with the next generation of public employees. As City Manager Michael Young points out, "Most managers are passionate about the profession, and as such, we must be engaged to develop and foster the managers of the future. If we are to continue the high level of ethical, moral, and [career] professionalism within our ranks, we must also be committed to the managers of the future."

Zachariah Friend is a 2004 graduate of the Georgetown Public Policy Institute (zf7@georgetown.edu), and has worked as a management assistant for two local governments and for ICMA, Washington, D.C. This article was originally published in the March/April 2004 issue of the Michigan Municipal Review *published by the Michigan Municipal League.*

Remember the Lorax

by Elizabeth Kellar

Remember the Lorax, that feisty Dr. Seuss character who spoke for the trees? He took his stewardship responsibilities seriously and gave voice to the Truffula trees because the trees had no tongues. But he didn't stop there. He told others about the Brown Bar-ba-loots and all of the other inhabitants of his community.

Why does the story of the Lorax resonate today? Perhaps it is because we baby boomers are reflecting on our responsibility to the next generation. We remember those who inspired us with their words and deeds. Can we convey our passion for public service in a way that rings true to the next generation of public servants?

The first day I walked into John Dever's office in 1974, when he was city manager of Sunnyvale, California, I noticed two documents framed on his wall: the ICMA Code of Ethics and the Athenian Oath. Neither of these documents had been a subject of study in the political science courses I took, but they told me something about the city manager seated in front of me.

When I expressed an interest in learning more about city management, John Dever recommended that I consider taking a course offered by ICMA. Later, he took two of us assistants with him when he attended the California City Managers' Department meeting and encouraged us to attend ICMA's annual conference in Seattle. I became a member of ICMA when I registered for my first conference. Sure, there was a discount for the conference attached to the membership, but I was already convinced that ICMA was the mother ship for top local government professionals.

Voices to Remember

Later, when John Dever became president of ICMA, he spoke at the 1986 annual conference. His words, like those of the Lorax, are timeless: "Our friends in academia have rediscovered political 'power.' Effective government no longer seems of interest to them. Recently, the dean of one of our most prestigious graduate schools of government stated that the primary function of a local chief executive is to broker power. I wonder, in that scenario, who looks out for the powerless?…It is time we all quit worrying about who is to blame and instead focus on how we can make a difference and what we can do through this Association to make a difference."

Another voice I'll always remember belonged to Richard Childs. I had been working at ICMA a short time when an older gentleman appeared in my doorway wagging his finger at me. Come to think of it, his passionate, raspy voice was a little like that of the Lorax. "What are you doing to get the League of Women Voters interested in city management?" he asked. "Where are our allies?" It was one of the last visits Richard Childs made to ICMA. Any of us who met Richard Childs still hear those words in the back of our heads when we look for new ways to explain the value of professional management.

When I learned more about Richard Childs and his contributions, I was only more awed by the power of an individual to make a difference. In 1915, he had this to say about the city management profession: "Someday, we shall have managers here known not for saving taxes but for great new enterprises of service." Richard Childs entreated us to aim high.

Yes, we need competence, experience, and a commitment to professional development to be effective city and county managers. Beyond that, however, we need heart and authenticity. When we speak to our staff, elected officials, and those in our communities, we need to find ways to help them connect with those we are serving. As John Gardner once said, "To help

new generations rediscover the living elements of our traditions and adapt them to present realities is a task of leadership."

We can have conversations that shed light on why we care so much about this work. As we explain the ins and outs of strategic planning and financial management, we can also talk about the ways we help those in our communities who most lack power.

- A child walking to school who assumes there will be a safe way to get there.

- The single parent who struggles to make ends meet, hoping someone will think about her situation because she doesn't have time to speak at a council meeting.

- A teenager who looks for a place to enjoy sports after school to get away from a troubled neighborhood.

- A disabled veteran who wants to get back to a productive work life and needs a transportation system that allows him to be independent.

- Recent immigrants who want to take English classes at the local library and borrow books for their children.

- Elderly residents who want to remain in the community but who struggle to find assisted living that is affordable.

There are so many who count on us. And the joy of public service is that we can make a difference in their lives by the work that we do. Let's not keep this a secret. Recently, I came across a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi (1869–1948) on the streets of Washington, D.C. His words won't be forgotten, either: "I will give you a Talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test. Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen, and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions? Then you will find your doubts and yourself melting."

Share Values

Whether we share our values for public service in quiet conversations or more boldly, now is the time for action. ICMA has some ideas to get you started. Encourage someone who might be a good city or county manager to join ICMA, and offer to endorse his or her application. Send someone from your local government to the ICMA conference. There is a track of sessions at the 2004 San Diego conference geared to emerging leaders.

Go to ICMA's Web site, at www.icma.org, and click on "JobCenter." Under the subhead "Resources," you'll find a *Next Generation Resource Guide*, edited by ICMA Vice President Frank Benest and filled with tips and solid information. If you are ready to hire an intern, the *Internship Toolkit* is a helpful resource, also located at the JobCenter site. Both of these documents are complimentary and downloadable from the Web site.

Perhaps you are intrigued with the idea of serving as a host community for an undergraduate internship program organized by Wittenberg University. Under the supervision of two college professors with local government experience, this program brings eight to 15 students to your community during the summer who will work on administrative projects that you identify. And if your community is able to support a well-qualified MPA graduate for one year, the competitive Local Government Management Fellowship program is entering its second year.

Let's do our part to pass on our public service Truffula seed to the next generation.

Elizabeth Kellar, Deputy Executive Director, ICMA, Washington, D.C.

39 Best Practices for Preparing the Next Generation

by Frank Benest

Preparing for a senior management position is of course the responsibility of the aspiring manager. Top executives in the local government organization, however, can provide specific support and a structure for developing talent. This article describes the best practices of city and county managers who have focused on their developmental role in preparing the next generation.

Although each senior manager is unique, and though organizations are of different sizes and have different capacities, traditions, and cultures, the following 39-point menu offers choices for every senior manager. Top executives in local government can provide support and a structure for developing talent.

Personal Outlook

Specific practices, programs, and other efforts to groom up-and-comers flow from positive attitudes:

1. **Acknowledge that the profession as a whole and your own organization in particular need to secure replacement talent for top positions.** City and county managers and other senior managers need to educate themselves on this quiet crisis.

2. **Recognize talent development as a primary role, of equal importance to other executive management tasks.** If the longer-term developmental role is not a primary responsibility, it will get shoved aside by urgent, shorter-term challenges. But if something is believed important, it will occupy time and attention—an executive's most significant resources.

3. **Understand that the chief executive is first and foremost a role model.** The most powerful way in which adults, as well as children, learn is through the modeling of behavior. Managers must therefore recognize that their every action will be observed by subordinates and will serve—for better or worse—to shape their successors' attitudes and behaviors.

4. **Develop a more risk-taking attitude.** Many senior managers are risk-averse, but managers who consciously develop talent must be open to mistakes. Managers should encourage up-and-comers to stretch, take on new roles, and make mistakes—even visible ones. Learning and growth occur after missteps, even failures.

5. **Adopt a broader notion of professional legacy.** A legacy includes not only specific community improvements but also talent development.

Specific Practices

Once the chief executive and other senior managers have decided to develop talent, they can choose from the best practices that engage aspiring managers in experiences that promote learning by doing, instead of learning by formal education and training only.

To identify best practices and to explore obstacles that are perceived to get in the way of younger people becoming the successors to top management positions, the League of California Cities first surveyed aspiring managers and conducted focus groups. Younger respondents cited: the lack of time spent with senior managers; few direct supervisory responsibilities; a lack of broad experience, especially line authority over different functions; an absence of a big-picture view of the organization; minimal organization visibility; and little sense of real politics. For these reasons,

many best practices exist for countering these major obstacles:

6. Articulate to the whole organization, and especially to the management team, the need to develop replacement talent as a key organizational challenge. Without an understanding by management of the replacement-gap problem, other staff will not comprehend and may even resent efforts of the chief executive or other senior managers. In addition, many of the best practices must be shared across top management to be effective.

7. Identify up-and-comers from throughout the organization (not just the city or county manager's office) who have the talent and the potential to lead. Because senior managers have limited time and attention to invest in developing talent, top management must focus time and resources on those most likely to develop as potential successors.

8. Devote sufficient time to up-and-comers. Time and attention are an executive's primary resources to invest. Spending time with aspiring managers will signal the executive's interest in them and will act as a significant motivator.

9. Engage aspiring managers in conversations of substance. Assistants and staff learn best through the modeling of behavior, and behavior can be more clearly understood if the leader converses with them about specific situations. Such conversations can focus on the context and demands of a problematic situation, the approach of the leader in addressing the problem, and what was learned.

Through such informal conversations, aspiring managers can learn about the big picture and the politics of the organization, the complexities and subtleties of relating to councils and other governing boards or external entities, and, more generally, how senior managers think and strategize. During these conversations, the senior manager can also provide informal and ongoing performance feedback.

10. Share your personal experiences and professional journeys with aspiring managers. A great way to engage a talented employee in one of these conversations is to share your personal journey, including your first interest in public service, transforming experiences, stops along the way of your

career adventure, missteps and other challenges, significant mentors, and achievement of career goals. Such personal stories are powerful, and they encourage up-and-comers to create their own career journeys. During these informal development conversations, the executive—to assess how assistance might be offered—also can ask the younger person about dreams, goals, and career plans.

11. Give aspiring managers a broad range of technical assignments. Potential successors must acquire experience in budget, personnel, labor relations, contract management, legislative analysis and advocacy, and intergovernmental or external relations. In e-mail surveys and focus groups conducted as part of research being pursued, management assistants clearly felt that they lacked opportunities to develop a broad range of these hard skills and technical responsibilities.

12. Place aspiring managers in a variety of departments, especially line departments. They need to get a good, basic education in public works, public safety, recreation and community services, and utilities, as well as in administrative support areas such as finance and human resources. Upward-looking young people will become familiar with the differing styles of senior managers: their philosophies, organizational perspectives, and problem-solving approaches they will have a chance to identify people they wish to emulate (or not) as they progress in their careers.

13. Assign lead authority in managing special projects. Often, talented support staff are assigned only to support roles in multidepartmental, special-project teams focused on downtown development, infrastructure, neighborhood services, affordable housing, citizen participation, and other cross-functional needs. As a stretch assignment, the executive can ask them to lead the special-project teams (this will include the authority to direct team members) and then, of course, can announce the assignment and publicly articulate these leadership roles.

Involvement with multidepartmental teams also offers the aspiring leader a bigger-picture view and various organizational perspectives. As part of the learning process, the junior manager acting as team leader could debrief with the executive who

> Succession planning minimizes the concern raised by aspiring managers in our e-mail survey that "moving one's family around the state or country" was a key obstacle to becoming a city or county manager eventually.

convened or sponsored the team and receive any feedback and advice. It is interesting to note that, in e-mail surveys, managers often cited inadequate soft skills as key impediments to the advancement of assistants; in surveys of assistants, however, the assistants often emphasized the need to build hard skills in order to move up in management.

14.   Provide direct supervisory authority, especially through the positions of acting manager or interim manager. One critical gap in the skills portfolios of management assistants, analysts, and other administrative staff is the lack of experience in direct supervision of employees. In our surveys, both managers and assistants strongly suggested that local government managers fill vacant supervisor and manager positions at the unit, division, and department levels with interim or acting managers from the up-and-comer group.

To increase the support structure for interim managers, senior managers could match them with other senior managers who could assist them. In addition to the experience of direct line authority over employees and service programs, acting supervisors—with the active support of higher-ups— can gain a wealth of organizational knowledge, self-confidence, and new contacts.

15.   Structure the assignment to include council, board, and/or commission interaction. Aspiring managers often do not have much contact with members of governing boards, official advisory commissions, or citizen committees. Consequently, they do not develop the necessary political acumen for more responsible management positions, or they often fear the sometimes messy, rough-and-tumble interaction with boards and advisory groups. Stretch assignments should include taking a project from idea conception to council or board approval; this should involve writing the staff report and making any public presentations.

16.   Assign liaison responsibilities. Up-and-comers, with adequate support, can serve as liaisons to council and board standing or ad hoc committees, advisory commissions, citizen committees appointed by the council or chief executive, and/or external groups like the chamber of commerce and neighborhood associations.

17.   Put an assistant in charge of agenda planning or budget. If the assistant manager, assistant to the manager, or principal analyst coordinates council agenda planning, budget development, or a capital improvement project, that person will learn to deal with complexity, receive a lot of visibility, and have to interact with department directors, the mayor, and councilmembers regularly.

18.   Articulate the rewards of local government management. City and county managers complain too much about unreasonable or meddlesome elected officials, less-than-competent employees, and hypercritical citizens. Although it is sometimes healthy to share the challenges of our positions, it is also important to promote the benefits, rewards, and joys of our jobs throughout our organizations as well as in professional settings.

Assistants do not always perceive sufficient rewards to offset the problems, stresses, and even the occasional abuse involved in the top job. In our e-mail survey, assistants cited (in addition to good pay and good benefits) several rewards of local government management:

- Making a difference in the community.
- Improving the organization.
- Addressing diverse and stimulating challenges.
- Serving as a linchpin among council, staff, and community.
- Engaging citizens, other government agencies, and community organizations in solving problems.

These are the rewards of city and county management that resonate with our successors. Therefore, we need to articulate the joys of leading. Otherwise, why would bright and talented local government staff aspire to the position of chief executive?

19.   Urge aspiring managers to involve themselves in the profession. Many chief executives cited as critical their involvement in their state associations, area manager groups, ICMA, associations of assistants, and the like. Managers can support aspiring managers by budgeting funds for their professional development activities, encouraging their involvement, giving them committee work, and even inviting them to accompany the chief executive to a luncheon of area managers or to a state conference of managers.

20.   Encourage aspiring managers to complete an MPA or an M.B.A. degree. An MPA or M.B.A. not only provides a solid education for local government management but also screens in those eligible for advancement. Senior managers can help aspiring managers secure graduate degrees by providing tuition reimbursement, flexible schedules that permit class attendance, and work projects that can double as class projects.

21.   Authorize an up-and-comer to troubleshoot and fix an organizational problem. Such an assignment provides high visibility for the troubleshooter, as well as practical experience in problem solving,

dealing with sensitive or controversial situations, and resolving conflict.

22. **Include the assistant to the manager on the executive team,** rotate management assistants through the executive team, and/or encourage department heads to bring a division chief or a management assistant periodically to executive team meetings. Participating in executive team discussions or just listening to team dialogues affords a big-picture view of the organization, educates aspiring managers about the politics of the community and the organization, widens contacts, sends a positive message about developing talent, and serves as a reward in itself.

23. **Ask the assistant to give you input into the annual performance evaluations of department directors** (and let this input be known!). Because management assistants in the manager's office, as well as assistant managers, often have significant interaction with department heads, chief executives can request their input during performance evaluations. Acknowledging this practice will certainly make it easier for assistants to secure cooperation from department heads. In addition, it will train aspiring managers to evaluate performance and to understand the criteria by which the chief executive evaluates.

24. **Teach how the manager deals with demanding, bullying, or otherwise troublesome elected officials.** Because assistants may feel intimidated by overly demanding elected officials, the manager can use a conflict situation with a councilmember or a board member as an object lesson for aspiring managers. Remembering that the best way to teach is through modeling, the manager, in a conflict with a councilmember, could reflect with an assistant about possible respectful yet assertive responses. The assistant will get some ideas about how to interact appropriately with councilmembers, even in difficult situations.

Structured Programs

In the face of the growing replacement gap in senior management, some local governments have developed formal programs or other structured mechanisms to develop talent and potential successors:

25. **Set up a pool of management assistants who rotate among various departments.** Departments should be required to conduct a structured orientation for the management assistant with respect to the department as well as new duties. Some programs also set criteria to ensure that the department gives substantial work assignments to management assistants.

26. **Involve management assistants from various departments in quarterly seminars led by the chief executive or senior managers.** The senior manager might share a personal journey and discuss a key organizational challenge in an interactive fashion. Participants then might be asked to share and reflect upon their own work and project experiences in the departments. One or two participants might also be assigned to discuss an article or training experience or asked to share a learning report. The seminar format is an opportunity to network, connect with senior managers, and exchange information.

27. **Assign a team of management assistants from various departments to conduct an ongoing or special project of organizational significance.** After collecting data and analyzing the problem, the team can present its recommendations to the department heads and the chief executive for consideration. In addition to team building and problem solving, this experience supplies visibility and leadership development, as well as project management opportunities.

28. **Create a leadership academy or management certificate program for aspiring managers.** Some local governments are large enough to establish their own academy or certificate program or jointly develop and fund the program with other local governments or through a community college, local university, or even the chamber of commerce. The curriculum often includes leadership philosophy, development of hard and soft skills, a class project, and networking opportunities. Department directors and other managers often nominate the participants.

29. **Build career ladders, or appoint intermediate positions** (for example, principal analyst or assistant to the manager) so that management assistants can move up in the organization and gain additional responsibility, authority, and management experience. A ladder of move-up positions and a tradition of upward mobility also help the organization better retain its talent.

> Managers must recognize that their every action will be observed by subordinates and will serve—for better or worse—to shape their successors' attitudes and behaviors.

30. Establish a formal succession plan for the organization. This is the most structured mechanism for ensuring that ready and able successors are available when senior managers leave or retire. Succession planning is common in the private sector and can be adapted to the public sector, including local government. Although the plan may reside organizationally in the human resources department and be managed by the human resources director, it is the responsibility of the executive team to develop, implement, and revise the succession plan as circumstances change. A typical succession plan identifies:

- Key management positions for which internal successors must be groomed.
- Knowledge, skills, competencies, and experiences required of successors if they are to move up.
- A ladder of succession, including rungs of increasing responsibility and authority.
- The specific group of employees to be developed over time.
- Mentors who will informally or formally coach the potential successors.
- Internal and/or external training, opportunities, and special assignments that will assist in the professional development of each designated employee.

In addition to providing ready and able successors, a formal succession-planning process better retains staff. Succession planning also minimizes the concern raised by aspiring managers in our e-mail survey that "moving one's family around the state or country" was a key obstacle to becoming a city or county manager eventually.

31. Develop a certain number of special assignments in various departments for potential successors. Usually, these assignments are time-limited for six to eight months and entail a specific project with certain tangible outcomes or results desired by the end of the project period. Departments may bid on the limited number of special-assignment slots, and employees from other departments can formally apply.

Special-assignment opportunities can be advertised over the organization's intranet. Although special assignments must produce tangible results, it is equally important that they provide new learning experiences, perspectives, and contacts. Funding is often given to the donor department to "fill behind" the employee loaned on the special assignment.

32. Trade a management assistant or other aspiring manager to a neighboring local government. This is a good option for smaller organizations that cannot provide much mobility or many development opportunities for aspiring managers. Trading talent for a time-limited period furnishes up-and-coming managers with experience in different organizations, as well as new skills and learning opportunities they can bring back home.

Other Ideas

Here are some other ideas for developing and preparing aspiring managers:

33. Offer a short career development course within the organization (or through adult education or a community college). The course would focus on how to develop one's portfolio of skills and experiences, write a winning résumé, interview for promotions, and attract the attention of executive recruiters.

34. Ensure that there is no gender discrimination, ethnic bias, or harassment in the organization. The majority of employees entering the workforce in the coming years will be women and people of color. One focus group concerned with women in management identified harassment, especially sexual harassment, as a specific barrier to women's advancement. One participant recounted the instance of a male manager who harassed his female subordinate and was subsequently promoted, which sent a clear message to the organization; the female subordinate was devalued and shamed and eventually left the organization. Harassment of any kind is morally, ethically, and legally wrong. During a talent shortage, it is also stupid.

35. Encourage talented mid-career managers to enroll in workshops for future managers. In California, the California City Management Foundation funds and organizes an annual "Future City Manager" workshop. Space is limited, so participants must apply and be recommended by their managers. The format includes

> Managers can support aspiring managers by budgeting funds for their professional development activities, encouraging their involvement, giving them committee work, and even inviting them to accompany the chief executive to a luncheon of area managers or to a state conference of managers.

small groups and individual sessions. The instructors are a team comprising both well-established and first-time managers. Everyone shares personal journeys and discusses in an interactive setting the rewards, challenges, and skills of local government management.

36. **Include talent development as part of ICMA's code of ethics or knowledge assessment process.** If ICMA were to incorporate talent development into the code of ethics or into its knowledge assessment, it would certainly highlight this important role for managers and elevate its significance in the field of local government management.

37. **Attend workshops, query colleagues, read the literature, and learn from the private sector.** To the extent that developing talent or successors is a professional crisis, local government managers need to "go to school" on the issue. Educational resources could include ICMA University classes, workshops at state association conferences, learning from colleagues who have begun to address the challenge, and reading the literature on succession planning and related topics.

38. **Encourage your state association or group of area managers to host networking and/or educational events for up-and-comers.** Such events provide important information, widen networks, and motivate aspiring managers. Or better yet, a group of area managers can identify regional issues—

urban runoff, affordable housing, and transportation challenges, for example—for assistants to analyze and recommend solutions to the managers as a group. Of course, assistants can also be included as full members of area managers' groups.

39. **Participate in the annual conference of assistants.** By attending a conference of assistants, senior managers demonstrate that they care, and they provide attendees with an opportunity to enhance their networks. Local government managers can also serve on session panels, critique résumés, participate in mock interviews, and meet assistants informally at the social events.

A Legacy

Not every best practice is suitable for a particular chief executive or organization. By adopting a mix of these practices, however, all managers can effectively develop successes and leave long-term legacies for their communities and for the profession.

Reprinted from ICMA's Preparing the Next Generation: A Guide for Current and Future Local Government Managers. *To view online, visit the Web site at jobs.icma.org, scroll down to Resources and to Preparing the Next Generation.*

Frank Benest is city manager, Palo Alto, California (Frank.Benest@CityofPaloAlto.org).

Building a Workplace That Recognizes Generational Diversity

by Glenn Southard and Jim Lewis

Up until a few years ago, generational issues were not being widely discussed by public sector managers. Now, not a month goes by without at least one article in the public sector periodicals on how to manage age diversity in the workplace or addressing the need to recruit the next generation of public servants. Unfortunately, few of these articles actually offer proven suggestions on how to devise an appropriate mix of generations.

Long before it was popular or even identified as a generational issue, the city of Claremont, California, had a series of programs addressing the needs and desires—personal and professional—of its employees. For more than a decade, we've made a deliberate effort to provide our employees with flexibility, professional development, access to technology, mentoring opportunities, a balance between their personal and professional lives, and chances to tackle significant projects early in their careers because we believed this would make for more satisfied, and therefore more productive, employees.

Since then, it's been determined that each of these offerings resonates differently with each generation. While there are some mutually shared values among generations, that which motivates and appeals to

> Through discussions with younger employees, we have found that the traditional three-month-long government hiring process consisting of tests, multiple oral boards, interviews, and eligibility lists detracts from the younger generation's interest in public service.

workers from the younger Generations X and Y is somewhat different from what appeals to baby boomers.

As a result, the package of programs we originally developed to help Claremont employees reach their full potential has also become the reason for our success in recruiting the next generation, as well as retaining our experienced baby boomers. Little did we know that the programs regarded as innovative a decade ago would now be expected by the next generation of workers, and that these programs would also be a business necessity as we prepare the younger generation to "step up" earlier in their career than others have had to in the past.

The Problem

Why has it become so critical that we increase our efforts related to generational issues? Because we need to prepare younger workers for higher-level jobs sooner in their careers than ever before. And why is this? Basically, there are two primary factors. First is the statistical reality that there simply aren't enough people in the age groups known as Generation X and Generation Y (those born between 1964 and 1985) to replace the baby boomers (1946 to 1963), many of whom are

quickly approaching retirement age.

Aggravating this situation are the enhanced retirement packages and options being offered by various organizations, including the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS). Because the labor pool is shrinking on the front end, we cannot afford to have all our experienced workers siphoned away at the same time.

We're sure the generational shift being experienced in Claremont is similar to what's happening at other organizations. Jointly, baby boomers and the preceding "silent generation" make up 56 percent of Claremont's workforce. Many of these individuals are already of retirement age, while others plan to retire in the relatively near future. Over the next 10 years, an average of seven employees from our full-time workforce of 176 workers will reach retirement age each year.

We don't believe it's possible to recruit enough new young employees to fill the gap completely. Successful strategies for maintaining mature workers are necessary to make up the difference. Only by developing programs and benefits that appeal to each generation will it be possible to attract younger workers and retain longer-term employees.

Claremont's Approach

The programs we've developed in Claremont over the years are the results of some basic research among employees: we asked what was important to them. More recently, we brought some of the leading thinkers of the "generational diversity" field into our organization to conduct workshops and focus groups, which have validated most of our initial findings.

For example, we found that baby boomers are interested in having the flexibility to manage their time and workload in a way that allows them to "do it all." Gen X workers have an entrepreneurial spirit and are powerful innovators. Our youngest workers tend to have a real sense of independence and are goal-oriented.

Our response has been to create a culture that connects the shared values of baby boomers, Gen Xers, and Gen Yers while also recognizing the unique characteristics of each generation. Here is a list of the programs, incentives, and benefits we've developed, grouped according to the generations to which they primarily appeal.

Programs for Generation X and Generation Y

People from these two generations have a number of common characteristics, including a sense of independence and a goal orientation. They are more inclined to look for instant gratification, as opposed to making a long-term investment of time and effort. They also desire career challenges, job flexibility, and extensive training and development opportunities. We also know that Gen Xers and Gen Yers are less likely to have strong loyalties to an employer and therefore are more likely to move from job to job than their predecessors—that is, unless they are motivated to stay.

Gen X workers come to us with a strong sense of independence, cultivated during their days as "latchkey kids." They want to make decisions on their own and to determine when and how they will get their work done. Gen Xers see the ability to control their schedules as being synonymous with their independence. These Claremont programs and benefits have been developed to address the preferences of the Generation X and Y employees:

Employee leadership academy. The city partnered with the nationally recognized Kravis Leadership Institute of Claremont McKenna College to offer a nine-month seminar focused on leadership development. Seminar participants are 15 nonmanagement employees. The curriculum includes guest speakers, readings, exercises, and assessments. The goals of the seminar are to provide employees with experiences their current job assignment may not offer, and to develop these employees so they might become managers in the organization sooner than they would in other organizations.

Mentoring and access. The department heads and city manager are readily accessible to all employees for discussions about careers and professional development. Our organization's culture strongly encourages the mentoring of employees, if they so desire. It is common for managers to take younger employees with them to professional workshops and conferences, high-level meetings, and community events. Our door is always open to all employees. We enjoy hearing of their professional goals and are committed to ensuring that earnest employees are able to achieve them.

A chance behind the wheel. Part of our culture involves giving younger employees experiences that they probably wouldn't have in other organizations. Interns and administrative aides are given opportunities to make presentations before the city council. Management analysts chair citywide task forces.

> We are encouraged by the success of our efforts in Claremont. In particular, we have reduced our attrition rate among Gen Xers from 23 percent to 8 percent.

When the youngest of this article's authors was appointed as the city's budget officer at the age of 27, he had only four years of full-time experience, but he was given the task of putting together and "selling" the city's $42 million budget. The finance manager/city treasurer was appointed at the age of 31. Our experience has been that, when high expectations are set, these employees are able to deliver.

Recognition and incentive bonuses. The bonus program includes three levels of recognition, which can be instantly awarded to employees who exceed expectations in their work assignments. The gift-certificate recognition program awards a $25 gift card to employees who go above and beyond the call of duty on a particular assignment.

Employees can nominate each other for a cash bonus of up to $700 for an employee's performance of an outstanding action not expected for his or her skill level; for outstanding one-time actions; for extraordinary courage, diligence, empathy, and patience; or for a commitment of an employee's own time. Department heads must approve these bonuses.

The final level of recognition, the City Manager's Award of Excellence, is a $1,000 cash award presented by the city manager for exceptional performance on a project of great significance to the council and community.

Recruiting in the 21st-century process. Through discussions with younger employees, we have found that the traditional three-month-long government hiring process consisting of tests, multiple oral boards, interviews, and eligibility lists detracts from the younger generation's interest in public service. Gen Xers and Yers expect to apply for a job and to be hired within two weeks, in a process similar to that found in the private sector.

We have streamlined the recruitment process by tightening the notification and application period and promptly scheduling interviews. We now are able to hire employees within three weeks of the recruitment closing date. In some cases, for specialized positions, we encourage employees to recruit colleagues directly from other communities. In this situation, individuals are invited to interview with the city. If they accept, the assistant city manager and other members of the management team interview them. If these candidates are a "fit," they are hired immediately. This streamlined process is extremely appealing to younger workers.

Three weeks of vacation granted after one year of service. During the first year of service, employees receive 96 hours of vacation. As an immediate reward for beginning the second year, the employees' vacation amount is increased to 120 hours.

Comprehensive intranet site. The organization is making every effort to create an innovative, effective, user-friendly technology infrastructure. In addition to making portable electronic devices and laptop computers available throughout the organization, we have developed an extensive intranet site. The site includes all staff reports, minutes, agendas, administrative policies, codes, and ordinances. It also interacts with the GIS system and includes department-specific sites.

A bulletin board is available for employees to post information. The site is important because it allows all employees access to information, regardless of their positions, and gives them the opportunity to see and comment on what is going on in the organization.

Conversion of administrative leave into cash. To encourage the use of administrative leave, management employees have the option to "cash out" 40 of their 80 hours of administrative leave each December, provided they've taken the other 40 hours off during the calendar year. This program encourages the use of leave time and allows the flexibility to each employee to receive additional cash compensation or time off at his or her discretion.

Conversion of our health-benefit cafeteria plan into a 457 Deferred-Compensation Account. Employees receive $878 per month for health coverage. The cafeteria plan covers medical, dental, and vision coverage, along with expanded life insurance. Unlike some plans, our program allows employees to place any unused amount in their deferred-compensation plan. This option is popular with younger employees, who may not have families yet and therefore might not normally be able to use the entire amount.

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Programs That Appeal to Baby Boomers

Baby boomers in the workplace are characterized by their hard work, long hours, and commitment to their employers. Boomers are dedicated, extremely loyal, and self-reliant. They value loyalty and often keep their jobs for long periods of time. They have a strong desire to be respected and recognized for the "dues" they have paid.

They also tend to be working parents, single or married, with a strong desire to be active parts of their children's lives, which entails attending a variety of extracurricular activities, as well as getting kids to the doctor or dentist when needed. As a result, boomers are interested in having the flexibility to manage their time and workload in a way that allows them to "do it all."

Here are some benefits and programs that are more attractive to this generation:

80-hour longevity leave bonus—a sabbatical. A one-time, 80-hour longevity leave bonus is given on the date of the employee's 10th anniversary and every five years thereafter. The sabbatical was once awarded at the 15th year but was moved to the 10th to give employees something to focus on sooner. Moving the sabbatical to the 10th year also allows employees to refresh and refocus earlier. Employees are encouraged to take longevity leave in conjunction with vacation time to make for a month-long "mini-sabbatical."

Increased vacation. Beginning with the 14th year of service, another 40 hours of vacation are awarded to employees, bringing total vacation hours to 160 hours per year.

Deferred-compensation incentive match. This program was established to provide tenure and savings incentives for employees. Beginning with an employee's third consecutive year of service, the city will match up to 1 percent of base pay, payable into the deferred-compensation account. This percentage increases to 2 percent at the beginning of a person's fifth year, 3 percent at the beginning of the sixth year, 4 percent at the beginning of the eighth year, and up to 5 percent at the beginning of the 10th year. The employee's match may come from any excess health benefit.

Fitness benefit. The city will reimburse up to $200 per year ($1,200 for management employees) toward the cost of a fitness/exercise or health-related program. Studies consistently show that a healthy workforce is happier and more productive. To qualify, employees must be enrolled in an exercise program on a regular basis and/or be involved in a program to increase health. While this program is extremely popular with both boomers and GenX/GenY employees, members of the baby boomer generation tend to be more aware of the importance of health as they grow older and tend to spend more on health-related efforts. The average sick-leave use citywide is fewer than 40 hours per year.

Some-time worker program. We are in the process of developing a program that will allow recently retired baby boomers to return to work to serve as consultants, laborers, recreation leaders, or reserve police officers within CalPERS system guidelines. This program will allow retired employees to work part-time with the organization and continue to be recognized for their expertise while providing value to the organization. It allows the city to retain the expertise rapidly being lost by the retirement of experienced workers and to use these experienced workers to continue to train and mentor younger workers.

Programs That Appeal to All Generations

Not surprisingly, some characteristics cut across generational lines. We've also found that some programs appeal to two or more generations, though not always for the same reason. Following are programs found to be of interest to all ages of workers. And of course, all of the preceding programs are available to employees regardless of their ages.

Alternative work schedule. Depending on the area of assignment, employees, with approval from their

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supervisors, may schedule an alternate workweek that works best for their personal and family needs. The city does not have an established alternative work-week applicable to all employees.

Telecommuting. Working from home, as needed, is acceptable if arranged with an employee's supervisor. Laptop computers are available for employees to check out, and dial-up access aids employees in connecting to the city's network from home.

Home computer program. Once a year, Claremont offers employees the chance to buy a desktop, laptop, or tablet computer system through an interest-free, two-year loan program. Computers are ordered through the city's technology division and conform to the city's technical specifications; this facilitates telecommuting and connection to the city's network. Having a comparable system at their residence allows employees to work effectively at home, assisting them with maintenance of their personal-professional balance. Payments are automatically deducted biweekly from an employee's paycheck.

Employee assistance program. The city cares about the emotional and physical well-being of its employees and their families and therefore offers this service, which provides free counseling services to all employees.

Floating holidays. Instead of setting all regular holidays for employees, the city offers three floating holidays per year to be used at each employee's discretion. This flexibility recognizes the different backgrounds and desires of our employees.

Performance-based pay. In addition to the immediate bonuses, employees have the opportunity to receive a lump-sum bonus of up to 5 percent (10 percent for managers) of their base pay as part of the annual evaluation process. Upon recommendation of the department head and approval of the city manager, bonuses are awarded to employees who maintain a consistently high level of performance, have a strong record of attendance and punctuality, provide a high level of customer service, display a positive attitude, and possess other attributes that benefit the organization.

Increases based on merit. Our organization does not offer any cost-of-living increases. A merit increase of up to 10 percent may be granted to an employee, based on an annual evaluation of his or her performance. A merit increase must be recommended by the first-line supervisor and approved by the division head and department head.

The amount of a merit increase is based on the employee's achievement of personal, divisional, departmental, and city goals and, if applicable, the accomplishment of work program items included in the city's budget. This program individually recognizes each employee's work product. Recognition for a job well done is important to both boomers and Xers.

Conclusion

It is now a business necessity that we continue to recruit the best and the brightest while retaining our experienced workforce. Offering benefits and generating a work environment that is appealing to members of each generation will assist us in meeting this goal. We are encouraged by the success of our efforts in Claremont. In particular, we have reduced our attrition rate among Gen Xers from 23 percent to 8 percent.

All of this must be an ongoing effort. Along these lines, we recently hosted a series of focus groups to determine what, if any, additional benefits and programs our employees wish to have. With a rapidly dwindling labor pool, it is critical that we work proactively to keep our team on the field.

Glenn Southard has been the city manager of Claremont, California, since 1988 and is 52 years of age. Jim Lewis is the assistant to the city manager, has been in Claremont since 1998, and is 28.

Our Legacy: The Next Generation

by Bob O'Neill

I was a 19-year-old college student majoring in political science and needed to find a place close to home to work for the summer. Fortunately, my fellowship was flexible enough so that all I needed was an appropriate place to work. Without much thought, I decided to stop by the Hampton, Virginia, City Hall to see if I might find something there.

Hampton didn't have a personnel department at that time, but I was told that the assistant city manager handled that function. For some reason, when Assistant City Manager Wendell White heard me asking about a summer job, he came out of his office to talk with me. By the end of the summer, I was working on personnel policies and all kinds of new federal grant projects, such as the Public Employment Program, a precursor to the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA).

Hampton Mayor Ann Kilgore also took an interest in me, inviting me to go with her to the Virginia Municipal League, National League of Cities, and Conference of Mayors meetings, where I met people like John Lindsay, who was mayor of New York City at the time. It was an exciting world for someone not yet 20, and before I knew it, Wendell had convinced me to transfer to a nearby university and keep working for the city while I went to school. When I graduated from college, Hampton offered me a stipend to go to graduate school if I would agree to work for the city for three years on completing my degree.

This was an attractive offer, as jobs weren't easy to find in the early 1970s. I worked in Hampton for 18 years, so the city's investment in my education paid off! I tell this story because each of us can remember the people who give us a hand. They see something in us that we can't see in ourselves at the time.

A large number of city and county managers are approaching retirement in a few short years: only 27 percent of the CAOs who responded to ICMA's 2002 State of the Profession Survey were between the ages of 30 and 45, while 72 percent were age 46 or older. We "senior" managers know we have a responsibility to help the next generation make the connections that we needed ourselves. "Bringing along" our successors is one of the most important functions of our profession, and as ICMA Vice President Frank Benest would say, it's fun and rewarding.

Because preparing the next generation also is a priority for the ICMA Executive Board, we have a number of initiatives under way:

- A resource guide, *Preparing the Next Generation: A Guide for Current and Future Local Government Managers*, was published on ICMA's Web site in September as a joint project between ICMA and the City Managers' Department of the League of California Cities. Frank Benest, city manager of Palo Alto, spearheaded the project and served as the editor for it, working closely with ICMA staff members Michele Frisby, Beth Kellar, and Mary Marik. It's chock-full of ideas, stories, and suggestions about ways you can help shape the future of the profession.

- An "Internship Tool Kit" that also is available on ICMA's Web site gives tips on ways to build successful internship programs in your communities.

- We are promoting careers in local government through a partnership with the academic community and a coalition that includes the National Association

of Schools of Public Administration and Affairs, the National Forum for Black Public Administrators, and the Hispanic Network. We'll be encouraging you and your staff to participate in career days on college campuses and to get to know their public administration and policy analysis faculties. To spread the word about careers in professional local government management, ICMA also has partnered with the Public Policy and International Affairs Program (PPIA), which is cosponsored by the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, to sponsor two public service career fairs, one on October 25 at the University of Southern California and one on November 8 at Georgia State University. PPIA is a grant-funded program created to address the underrepresentation of minorities in public service.

• ICMA is creating an inviting presence at http://icma.org where students can find career information, young-professional profiles, and ICMA student-membership information.

Another study recently conducted by ICMA revealed that, while roughly 75 percent of responding undergraduate and graduate students viewed a career in local government as somewhat-to-very appealing, nearly 55 percent had never considered a career as a city, town, or county manager, largely because they simply hadn't thought of the possibility.

In light of these statistics, there's probably nothing more important or rewarding that we can do as a profession than to attract, retain, and develop top-flight talent for the future well-being of our communities. This can be our most significant legacy and is our most important responsibility.

Robert J. O'Neill, Jr., is Executive Director of ICMA

The Ultimate Community Service

by Elizabeth Kellar

"When students hear the words 'public service,' they think of the kind of work they see in the nonprofit sector," wrote Paul C. Light, senior fellow, The Brookings Institution, in describing the results of a 2003 survey of 1,002 college seniors majoring in the humanities, social sciences, social work, and education. Only 28 percent of the students said that working for government was "completely public service," compared with 58 percent who saw nonprofit organizations in that light.[1]

City and county managers have awakened to this societal challenge and are beginning to reach out to young people in order to tell of their work experiences, so that young people can learn about opportunities in "the ultimate community service." Whether they tackled problems like youth violence, resolved a complex infrastructure problem that had divided a community for years, or made services more accessible to an increasingly diverse community, these managers have made a difference to the localities they have served.

Pushing for an Investment in Youth

After seeing a rash of 13-year-old children murdered in separate incidents, George Caravalho took up the challenge to bring his community together to do something about the problem. Then city manager of Santa Clarita, California, Caravalho knew that this was not a problem that could be solved either by the schools or by the police alone. A much more comprehensive approach was needed.

> Cameron reflects on another intangible benefit of being a county administrator: "You never wonder, what did you do with your life?"

He pressed for more investment in youth, and the city council became convinced that this strategy was critical to the well-being of the community. Caravalho speaks with pride about the substantial budget the council approved for parks and recreation programs and other community services. One tangible legacy of this investment in youth is a beautiful sports complex that includes gymnasiums, a teen center, a skateboard park, and swimming pools. While the motivation for the complex was to provide a safe and healthy environment for young people, residents of all ages enjoy the amenities.

Caravalho's passion to help society prepare for a multicultural future with no one ethnic group in the majority attracted him to his present job as city manager of Riverside, California. He is challenged by the sheer number of internal differences within our populations: young and old, gender, rich and poor, longtime residents and new immigrants. It is not easy to tackle issues like youth violence in our diverse communities, but Caravalho likes the can-do world of local government management, where he has sometimes found "tail winds" that support the positive changes he advocates.

Making a difference, one person at a time, is something that Caravalho likes about his career choice of city manager. He repeats the story of the child who walks along the beach, periodically picking up a starfish and throwing it back into the ocean. An adult tells the child that new waves will bring more starfish back to the beach and suggests that the child's efforts won't make much of a difference. "Made a difference to *that* starfish," observes the child.

Helping Someone Else Succeed

"Elected officials have a difficult job," says Tom Mauk, former city manager of La Habra and Whittier, California. "They hear from neighborhoods that are angry about things like traffic problems, demanding traffic lights, and speed bumps. But the money is not always there to address the needs that citizens have."

Taxes have never been popular, yet there are times when elected officials conclude that taxes must be raised to provide a needed service. When his elected leadership decided to put a tax measure up for a vote, Mauk spoke to citizen groups and helped the mayor prepare talks to give to various organizations.

After hearing more about the city's financial situation and the reason for the tax measure, sometimes citizens would come up to Mauk after the mayor's presentation and say, "We're going with the mayor. We're going to vote for the tax. We understand why it's needed now." Mauk would go home that day feeling good about the mayor's success.

Mauk also takes pride in his role as an advocate for his staff, especially in learning about their career successes. One former intern wrote to him recently to let him know that he had just been hired as director of finance for a city. The intern thanked Mauk for sending him to a city management seminar at which he learned a great deal and was inspired by his conversations with a number of career city managers and assistants.

And he remembers another former staff member, whose department director wanted to fire him. Mauk was not convinced that the department director had given the staff member enough time to learn his job and counseled the director to be patient. Nine years later, the staff member had been promoted and thanked Mauk for saving his job. Mauk was surprised that the staff member knew about his intervention but was pleased to hear about his success.

After 32 years in city management, Mauk now works in the private sector. He finds it curious that some of his private sector colleagues do not understand how to relate to people. "It's a myth that the private sector is more competitive than the public sector," observes Mauk. "You find that the talent, energy, drive, and work ethic in the public sector meets and often exceeds what you see in the private sector." Mauk thinks the difference is that people who work in

> The gray hair in the crowd reflects the reality that the profession has aged and that its members soon will be approaching retirement in record numbers. Who will replace them?

local government management have more passion for their work. When they picture a neighborhood full of frustration, they feel a sense of urgency about solving the problem before it becomes a crisis.

Serving the Underserved

"You need to bring a mindset that dealing with diversity is a joy," advises Charles Cameron, county administrator of Washington County, Oregon, in talking about the opportunity to alter people's lives for the better. "We underestimate what we can accomplish in the public sector."

Cameron notes that the public sector often has been the first in society to rise to these challenges: overcoming salary differentials among employees; hiring African Americans and women for all kinds of jobs; and making sure the employment environment is fair to gays and other groups who have faced discrimination. Cameron has found a great sense of accomplishment in exercising all of his authority to ensure that all quarters of the community are served, especially those not used to being served.

His approach to overcoming traditional barriers is to "blow people away with openness and constancy." To reach all parts of the community, "you need to get into the community where the culture is active," Cameron says. "For example, in the Hispanic community, you are likely to find that faith and family are part of the culture. So if you want the Hispanic community to participate, you'd better make room for grandma and the kids."

Cameron adds that it is important to break down barriers between government and the faith community. Washington County has an Interfaith Action Committee. The county staff works with the faith community, distributing information about community services at local churches and other places of worship, as one way to reach people. "Not enough is being done to help people," Cameron adds, "so we all need to be doing more."

He suggests a new paradigm that city and county managers might adopt: "You work off of a single set of priorities and mobilize all of the sectors and share responsibility." In Washington County, the Muslim, Jewish, Protestant, Catholic, and Evangelical faiths are all working with government on a common set of priorities.

"Values are a critical factor in Washington County's comprehensive economic development strategy," says

Cameron. "There is respect for the physical environment, as well as respect for the diversity and differences of the many cultures in the community."

And while community outreach work has been deeply rewarding to Cameron, he says he also takes pride in the core services the county provides to its residents. "Taking your family to the new county park and seeing people having fun is satisfying. Seeing how appreciative people are when the police arrive to assist them is another reminder of how important this work is."

Cameron reflects on another intangible benefit of being a county administrator: "You never wonder, what did you do with your life?"

Negotiating to Heal a Divided City

What do you do if you are the manager of a community with train tracks that run through the middle of it, dividing the city and limiting economic development, and you know that the city has not been able to resolve this problem for more than 50 years?

If you are Charles McNeely, city manager of Reno, Nevada, you dive headfirst into the challenge and look for ways to persuade everyone, from the railroad interests to the downtown merchants and the state and federal agencies, to find a common ground.

The railroads had long resisted change, but a merger between Union Pacific and Southern Pacific finally created a new set of circumstances for Reno. Because the railroads had to deal with the environmental impacts generated by the number of trains traveling through Reno, Nevada Senator Harry Reid persuaded the president of Union Pacific to discuss a possible agreement with the city of Reno to develop acceptable mitigation measures.

The deal required the railroad to make a $60 million contribution toward lowering the trainbed inside the city. Reno also worked to gain support for lowering the track from the U.S. Department of Transportation, the county government, and the state of Nevada. The state approved enabling legislation to allow Reno to add a room tax to help fund the project. In addition, the properties most benefited by the project agreed to a special assessment based on the value of their properties.

McNeely began working on the framework for a deal when the railroads merged in 1996, but the deal was not completed until 2002. He credits Reno's elected officials with having a long-term vision for this city improvement. "[The agreement] was not something that would help them in the next election cycle," McNeely notes. "Yet they supported it because they believed it was the direction the city should go. It was controversial, and there was stiff opposition to it." McNeely adds that this project was a defining issue in the most

recent council elections, and all of the elected officials who supported the project won their seats.

This was a difficult project to communicate to the public because it was so complex. But McNeely persevered, along with Reno's elected officials, and they discovered that the more information the public got about the project, the more supportive they were.

It's All About the People

When Peggy Merriss, city manager of Decatur, Georgia, considers her contributions over a 20-year career in the city, her every word reflects her people orientation. "I spent my first six years in Decatur as personnel director and feel very good about the diverse management team that we have been able to assemble," she says, "and I don't just mean diversity in terms of race and gender."

She describes the sanitation director, who was hired as a code enforcement officer. "He is an African American," notes Merriss, "who has a B.A. in mathematics and an M.A. in divinity. How many sanitation directors are ordained ministers?"

He became the sanitation director during a difficult time: the previous director had died, and annual turnover was extremely high. "[The new director] told the staff that he would stay for six months and that, at that time, they would vote on whether or not he should stay. They voted to keep him, and the turnover disappeared. Now, the only turnover in the department is due to retirements."

Merriss likes the fact that the management team has a wide range of perspectives and that some managers are in nontraditional jobs. "Decatur's facilities manager is a woman in a public works operation," says Merriss. "Our personnel director is Asian. The team reflects global diversity and is exceptionally competent."

Although it was a challenging year for the Decatur management team while Merriss served as ICMA's president (2002–2003), Merriss had confidence that the city was in good hands when she was away. One reason why the timing was good for Merriss to take on the leadership post at ICMA was that Decatur had just adopted a 10-year strategic plan in July 2000. "The city council questioned the initial investment of $300,000" in the strategic planning process, recalls Merriss. "I went to lunch with each member of the council to discuss the value of this investment. After thinking about it, they all supported it.

"We worked hard to ensure that the plan was in everyone's interests, and that meant that we had a phenomenal public process, involving 500 public interactions and meetings with every church and community group we could identify. Once we developed a physical growth plan, a social plan, and the organization strategies to support them, we applied for our first planning grant. When we completed the work on the

planning grant, we were successful in obtaining an implementation grant.

"Decatur's Livable Centers Initiative," says Merriss, "helped us build up areas near transit centers. We also encourage pedestrians with our public investment in sidewalks in this place-based development strategy. Our initial $300,000 strategic planning investment has generated $10 million in grants and private investment in commercial development. We've also energized what we call the 'green umbrella' group to positive action, with a focus on environmental cleanup days, streambed protection, and tree planting.

"The Decatur City Council Commission is totally behind this effort, and it now reviews the action steps to implement the strategic plan twice a year."

Golden Opportunities for the "Service Generation"

Anyone attending a meeting of local government managers can see the opportunities that lie ahead for young people seeking a way to make a difference in people's lives. The gray hair in the crowd reflects the reality that the profession has aged and that its members soon will be approaching retirement in record numbers (see Figure 1). Who will replace them?

A 2002 report published by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press paints an encouraging picture of the values that young people bring into the workplace. In looking at generational differences in the civic and political health of American citizens, the research center surveyed 3,246 residents, including 1,001 from the "Tech" Generation (ages 15 to 25) and 1,000 from the Gen X age group (born between 1964 and 1976). The Tech Generation (called "DotNets" in the Pew study) includes almost 40 million young adults who grew up with technology as a central part of their lives.[2]

What is striking about the Tech Generation is that it has a higher rate of volunteering than any other age group. Most of these young people began volunteering because "someone else put us together" (20 percent) or because they were recruited by an organization (39 percent).[3] Many of them began volunteer work because their high schools encouraged or required them to do community service work.[4] This age group also shows signs of being more trusting of their government. Some 64 percent say that government should do more to solve problems, and 65 percent support government regulation of business as a necessity.[5]

With its focus on college seniors (the class of 2003), the Brookings Institution's June 2003 report provides greater insights into how the Tech Generation may apply this volunteer ethic in its career choices. A robust 26 percent of the seniors said they had given serious consideration to public sector work, and 36 percent had given it somewhat serious consideration, whether the jobs were in government in the nonprofit sector, or for a contractor. Those seniors who were serious about public service had considered opportunities in the federal government (18 percent) and in state or local government (19 percent).[6]

What was disturbing about the survey results was that government was ranked below the nonprofit sector on a wide variety of questions (see Figure 2): less fair in its decisions (48 percent), compared with the nonprofit sector (74 percent) or a contractor (63 percent). In addition, government got the lowest ratings as a place where you could help people (66 percent), as opposed to NGOs (85 percent) and contractors (77 percent).[7]

Government was rated highest in just two areas: serving the country (81 percent) and providing better benefits (78 percent). The nonprofit sector ranked highest as a place to go for respect of family and friends and for a chance to make a difference.[8]

These results may not be surprising when one considers the constant messages that young people have heard throughout their lives. Since the late 1970s, most successful presidential campaigns have been run on an "anti-Washington" platform that suggested that there was substantial waste, fraud, and abuse in government, and that better results in services could be achieved by contracting-out more functions.

California's 1978 Proposition 13 was the first of many tax-cap initiatives that spawned imitations spread across the country, often passed with a fanfare of negative rhetoric about government. These negative messages were sometimes offset after a major disaster, most notably after September 11, 2001, when public opinion shifted to a more positive view of government. Citizens were reminded of the many functions that government provides, coordinates, or oversees.

How Do We Reach the Next Generation?

There are many clues to follow to tap into the service orientation of the young people who are entering the workplace or are in the early stages of their careers. As shown in Figure 3, the college seniors who partici-

Figure 1. Age Distribution of Appointed Managers in 1934, 1971, and 2002

Age	1934	1971	2002
Under 30	7%	26%	2%
31–40	34%	45%	13%
41–50	37%	21%	36%
51–60	19%	5%	43%
Over 60	3%	3%	7%

Note: Percentages for 2002 exceed 100 percent because of rounding.
Source: 2002 State of the Profession survey data (ICMA, July 2002).

pated in the Brookings Institution survey listed their top five most desirable job attributes.[9]

We also know that members of this Tech Generation have responded to the call to community service when they were asked to do so by their high schools. This is a generation that likes to be asked. Reaching out to young people, offering meaningful internships and entry-level jobs in which they can learn new skills and help people, is far more important than stressing high salaries. Only 30 percent of survey respondents said salary was an important consideration.

Scott Lazenby, city manager of Sandy, Oregon, is a good model for the importance of reaching out to young people. The city of Sandy runs a "shadow program" for high school students in which they are given the opportunity to shadow the manager, mayor, or a councilmember for a semester. Because this program goes on for a full semester and is truly a hands-on learning experience, students gain significant insights into city government. Lazenby recalls the look on one student's face when the mayor turned to the student at a public meeting and asked, "How would you vote?"

Another student who shadowed Lazenby went on to college and graduate school before taking his first job at a nonprofit organization. After getting experience in the nonprofit world, the former student applied for the finance director's job in Sandy, and Lazenby hired him. (He has since moved on to another community.)

There was an unexpected spin-off benefit from the high school student's experience. His mother, previously uninvolved in the community, decided to run for the Sandy city council—and won!

One reason that young people may be drawn to the nonprofit sector is that they have more experience with it through their volunteer work or internships. In the Brookings survey, more than half of the college seniors had had such experience, compared with just 11 percent who had had experience with either state or local government and 8 percent who had had experience with the federal government.[10]

We can take some of the mystery out of local government by affording some good opportunities for young people to gain experience in our communities.

Vancouver, British Columbia, has a cradle-to-age-25 strategy that includes outreach teams. Vancouver's goal is to let young people know that there is a place in the city for their ideas and input.

Nancy Largent, public involvement coordinator for Vancouver, explains that activities are geared to the age of the young people. Elementary school children, for example, are encouraged to "draw a vision of your community or neighborhood." The city also has supplied teaching modules to teachers, including some GIS teaching tools for geography instruction.

Debbie Anderson, Vancouver's social planner for children and youth, notes that "Vancouver's Civic Youth Strategy has recently developed and implemented a new, face-to-face, peer-based approach for engaging youth more meaningfully in civic government. Through the creation of a youth outreach team, youth have been hired to go out to the community, meet with other youth, and provide education and information on city programs and services.

"These young people are also out listening to what the issues and needs are of youth and bringing that information back to city hall. Through the formation of action-based working groups, issues can be addressed in partnership with city staff, youth-serving agencies, and youth from the community. For example, a number of community partners came together in a local neighborhood to support an innovative approach to involving young people of all ages in a city/community visioning process led by the planning department. A team of youth were trained in community asset mapping and then designed and led a program assessing the child- and youth-friendliness of local parks. They are now working with city staff to implement the recommendations."

Largent says that the city government still has to overcome a great deal of cynicism. The national conversations about government (often negative) tend to spill over to local government. The city has had success by going to the places where the young people are, including youth groups. Vancouver's Civic Youth Strategy (CYS) was connected to the city's successful bid to host the 2010 Winter Olympics, involving youth and adults in a day-long workshop to explore ways to

Figure 2. Percentage of College Seniors Who Said Nonprofit Sector Was Best at Each Role

Role	Preferred public service job		
	Government	**Nonprofit**	**Contractor**
Spending money wisely	55%	71%	58%
Being fair in its decisions	48%	74%	63%
Helping people	66%	85%	77%

Source: Paul C. Light, *In Search of Public Service* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, Center for Public Service, June 2003), p. 12; on the Web at www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/gs/cps/search/pdf. Note: N=1,002.

Figure 3. Job Characteristics Most Sought by College Seniors

1. Opportunity to help people	67%
2. Benefits	63%
3. Opportunity to do challenging work	63%
4. Opportunity to learn new skills	63%
5. Job security	60%

Source: Paul C. Light, *In Search of Public Service* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, Center for Public Service, June 2003), p. 15; on the Web at www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/gs/cps/search/pdf Note: N=1,002.

From the College Student's Viewpoint

Nicole Kopf doesn't know what a city manager does. The fourth-year college business student never knew her skills could be used just as easily in the public sector as in the private sector because no one ever told her. "I never thought of government as a job possibility," Kopf says. "I've always been told that, if I liked managing people and getting things done, I should get a business degree and work for a company." Kopf says she sees government as "a big game that hardly accomplishes anything."

Perceptions like this one concern Mary Hamilton, executive director for the American Society for Public Administration in Washington, D.C. "Unless young people have firsthand information about the positive aspects of public service," Hamilton says, "all they have is the unbalanced media portrayal of public employees as inferior people who are stuffy and bureaucratic at best, incompetent and uncaring at worst."

A surge of studies indicates that Kopf is only one of many young Americans focused on the private sector. A 2002 Hart-Teeter study found that only 27 percent of young Americans preferred working in the public sector, and a 2002 ICMA survey discovered that, of 65 college students in two introductory urban affairs classes at Cleveland State University, only 6 percent planned to pursue an advanced degree in political science or public administration. Between 1934 and 2002, the percentage of city managers aged 40 or younger dropped from 41 percent to 15 percent. The reports indicate that baby-boomer executives are approaching retirement with few young administrators ready to fill their public shoes.

Another study recently conducted by ICMA revealed that while roughly 75 percent of responding undergrad and graduate students viewed a career in local government as somewhat-to-very appealing, nearly 54 percent had never considered a career as a city, town, or county manager, largely because they simply hadn't considered the possibility.

Aware of this impending scenario, some managers worry that in the nation's current state of affairs, public servants will only be leftovers from private employment. "I'm really concerned that people are looking to the public sector [for careers] out of restricted options rather than drive," says Jim Keene, manager of Tucson, Arizona.

Keene worries that the priorities and perspectives of America's college students may have further adverse effects on integrity in the public management field. "Many students really have what I think is an immature and simplistic image of how society works, which is unfortunate for the community and nation as a whole," Keene says. "There is increased value placed on financial return and a generally material focus in life. This job requires passion and the ability to see a larger purpose that is bigger than oneself. I rarely see that passion."

Promoting the Profession

In an effort to counteract these trends, several organizations have developed nationwide campaigns to educate the public about the service sector and to recruit college students. This year, the International City/County Management Association launched a national campaign to assist local governments in promoting internships in the public sector.

The City Managers' Department of the League of California Cities is in the process of implementing a Next Generation Working Group

to groom potential public servants. The National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration, which represents more than 240 college and universities, has started the Public Service Careers Initiative to raise student awareness about government careers.

A research study headed by The George Washington University in Washington, D.C., found that, aside from job security and benefits, students perceived government positions as unattractive when compared with high-paying business positions. The greatest challenge for the national initiatives is combating an apparent predisposition to see government service as stagnant and not encouraging intellectual aggressiveness.

Ted Gaebler, a former city manager and author of the book *Reinventing Government*, says these notions may not be completely unfounded. He has spoken in 47 countries on this stagnation and on the negative image of government. He says government, including city management, has changed but that people in government positions aren't willing to abandon traditional concepts of their roles.

"There are a lot of people wedded to the past and afraid of their own shadow," he says. "New blood is the best thing that can happen right now. I will take brain, dedication, and focus over experience anytime." Gaebler is confident government jobs will not go unfilled and says recent trends are only cyclical. "Any idiot can manage. What we need is change."

A Greater Demand Arising

While campaigns strive to rally interest in local government management, students pursuing public administration—a field with fewer than 5 percent of managers under 30 years old—are finding a fertile job market, sometimes sooner than they expected.

University of Florida graduate Karen Kolinski works as a county management intern for Alachua County, Florida. Kolinski, who was offered a job managing a city before she'd even completed her degree, is wary of inexperienced graduates' filling open executive positions.

"I think it's important to gain experience coming up the ladder," Kolinski says. "There are great benefits from learning from someone experienced in the field." Kolinski credits her internship experience with showing her how to make a career out of helping the public.

"In the private arena, there's the money motivator, but then you also have the stress of meeting quotas, constantly making money for your company, and the energy you have to put into running the rat race," she says. "I can use that same energy to affect an outcome and see some customer receive a service and appreciate that service."

James Mercer, president of the Mercer Group, Inc., says that his management consulting firm has seen fewer and fewer young city managers but that there hasn't been a sharp decline yet. He does foresee increasing demand and says he hopes more young people will consider public management as a career choice.

"I believe there will be a larger demand for younger public officials in the future," he says, "and would encourage young people to pursue the public administration field because of the opportunities in it."

—Katie Reid, journalism major,
University of Florida, Gainesville, Florida, and daughter of
Randall Reid, county manager, Alachua County, Florida.

engage youth in a meaningful way. For more information about CYS, go to http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20030626/csb2.htm.

The academic community notes that few managers are involved in recruitment activities on college campuses. Many students simply don't know about opportunities in local government unless their parents have worked in government or they happen to have had an internship opportunity. Managers and assistants are welcome at college campuses, especially with career counselors and professors who like to offer real-world perspectives in their classrooms.

Yet another asset that managers may not always communicate to young people is the profession's deep commitment to ethical values. Not only can young people make a difference by working in local government, but also they can speak with pride about the principles that guide public service.

Parting Thoughts

My daughter graduated from college in 2003 with a major in sociology and holds views much like those reflected in the Brookings Institution study. She wants to make a difference, help people, and has told her parents many times, "Sorry, but I probably won't make much money." Her first job is with a nonprofit organization. Perhaps, like me, she'll be drawn to a job in local government after getting some experience in the nonprofit world.

How many of us with long public service careers feel a responsibility to share our passion for our work with today's young people?

George Wallace, city manager of Hampton, Virginia, remembers that his degree in accounting led to an unfulfilling first job as an auditor. After that uninspiring work experience, Wallace writes, "I got involved in community action and job training in the early 1970s and immediately felt I was accomplishing something and making a difference. My training contacts were with cities, and members of my board of directors were mayors of the contracted cities."

"This relationship led to my being selected as an assistant city manager of Hampton, until I became manager six years ago. My son, who is an executive in a Fortune 100 company, talks about how teachers (his mother) and public administrators (relative to the private sector) are grossly underpaid and questioned why I didn't make a transition to the private sector. My response was:

1. Where else are you going to make an immediate impact on one life or a group of lives?

2. Where else are you going to see an idea grow from a vague concept to a living entity that affects the economic well-being of a community for tens of years?

3. Where else are you a living role model for a community, giving young black men a chance to see and touch you?

4. Where else are you going to have the wide variety of challenges and experiences?

5. Where else are you going to meet such a wide spectrum of people?"

Notes

1 Paul C. Light, *In Search of Public Service* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, Center for Public Service, June 2003), p. 3; on the Web at www.brook.edu/dybdocroot/gs/cps/search.pdf.

2 Scott Keeter, Cliff Zukin, Molly Andolina, and Krista Jenkins, *The Civic and Political Health of the Nation: A Generational Portrait* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University, September 2002); on the Web at www.puaf.umd.edu/CIRCLE/research/products/Civic_and_Political_Health.pdf.

3 Keeter et al., p. 35.

4 Keeter et al., p. 19.

5 Keeter et al., p. 39.

6 Light, p. 5.

7 Light, p. 12.

8 Light, p. 13.

9 Light, p. 15.

10 Light, p. 20.

Elizabeth Kellar is deputy executive director of the International City/County Management Association, Washington, D.C. (ekellar@icma.org).

Next Generation Resource Guide

ICMA has partnered with the City Managers' Department of the League of California Cities and the California City Management Foundation to develop a resource guide to help senior managers reach out to the next generation of local government managers. It includes data, research, best practices, and a variety of articles about the rewards of public service. "The Ultimate Community Service" is one of the book's chapters. To view or download any part or all of *Preparing the Next Generation: A Guide for Current and Future Local Government Managers*, go to ICMA's Web site at icma.org, click on JobCenter, and look for the title under the Resources tab.

Remembering Your Mentors

by Les White

Some 20 years ago, I started focusing on assessing really capable managers and noting the values and skills that make them successful. Two years ago, I formalized these values and skills into a list of 31 "traits," which are set forth later in this article. I continue to use them as a basis for coaching managers and young professionals, as criteria for formal job performance reviews, and as a foundation for screening new hires. These traits, in effect, are the values I espouse for managing both local governments and nonprofit organizations.

After reading them, you may conclude that they are fairly obvious and simple. This is true, yet I believe that this is their value because sometimes we get lost in the rhetoric of systems management and of overly complex, bureaucratic statements, instead of remembering the fundamental values and skills we need to possess to perform effectively as local government managers.

Underlying Themes

In reviewing the traits, I have noted four underlying themes that Dr. Peter Koestenbaum describes in his book *Leadership: The Inner Side of Greatness*. In his "Leadership Diamond," Koestenbaum describes four ingredients of greatness. They are: vision ("thinking big and new"), reality ("being in touch with the facts, with the truth"), ethics ("people matter to you… integrity and morality are important to you"), and courage ("the willingness to take risks").

When you observe effective leaders, you will see these four dimensions in their leadership skills. They also will clearly embody most, if not all, of the 31 traits.

So, I want to thank my own mentors for being the inspiration that has allowed me to identify virtually all of the principles, values, and skills it takes to be

effective in the management profession. To the extent that any of us has had mentors, we need to thank them and remind ourselves of their contributions to us.

And when I thank my mentors, I need to reach across a broad spectrum of contributors who have ranged from bosses to peers and subordinates, to elected officials, to family and friends, and even to some people who have served me as bad examples. For me, mentors are not one or two "influencers" but many.

Some of My Exemplars

Bosses

I have been blessed with an unusually talented succession of bosses, including John Wentz, former manager of Riverside and Stockton, California; John Taylor, former manager of Fresno, California, and Kansas City, Missouri; and Ralph Hanley, former manager of Fresno, California, and Salem, Oregon, to name a few.

What set these managers apart was their ethical core, intellect, and courage to act in tough, political situations without regard for their careers. They were shining examples as I was starting my career and even much later in life because I never forgot the lessons they taught me.

John Wentz was a master at customer service, through his practice of "wandering around." John Taylor and Ralph Hanley taught me how to speak and write in what I describe as "straight talk." Ralph Hanley used to say that you need three things to be a successful manager: guts, intellect, and integrity. Although I used to think this was just another one of those pat, simplistic formulas, after 40 years of working in managerial positions in the public and nonprofit sectors, I found that he was right on the mark because sometimes the simplest statements of principles are

those that continue to ring true throughout one's career.

By the way, all three of these managers met Ralph Hanley's three-pronged test of guts, intellect, and integrity.

Peers and Subordinates

A number of peers have served me as "beacons in the night" by helping guide me in this profession. Three recent examples are George Caravalho, manager, Riverside, California; Kevin Duggan, manager, Mountain View, California; and David Mora, manager, Salinas, California.

These individuals have been consistently superior managers with respect to intellect and integrity, and David Mora and George Caravalho have markedly advanced the local government management profession. Kevin Duggan's recent handling of a politically sensitive situation with an elected official, as profiled in this magazine last year, was a potent reminder of the integrity and courage it takes to be an effective city manager.

But it has not just been peers who have helped guide my career. Two people I hired in San Jose were the epitome of courage, integrity, and consistent professionalism. These two always were up to doing the difficult assignments: Lou Garcia, currently city manager of Redondo Beach, and Darrell Dearborn, retired deputy city manager of San Jose.

Good managers should remember that their effectiveness is determined by the quality of the people around them and that there is much to be learned from all employees in their organizations.

Elected Officials

Most of us who have been in this business of local government have had the pleasure at one time or another of serving with elected officials or board members who have been dedicated to doing a first-rate job for their constituencies. They have cared about customers, valued professional staff and their opinions, and conducted themselves with the utmost dignity and integrity.

I am reminded of two women who were the first to serve on the councils in Fresno and Fullerton, respectively: Linda Mack and Frances Wood. They had to withstand criticism from their peers because they took the time and had the interest to do their homework on difficult issues before making decisions. I admired the courage they brought to the council chambers each week, and the strength of their convictions in doing a good job under occasionally adverse circumstances.

Family and Friends

People should never underestimate the importance of family members as mentors. Family and friends

can help set in place your core values and be effective reminders in your day-to-day work of what it takes to succeed. My father was a self-educated man of integrity and intellect, my mother is a person of great perseverance, and my wife, Marilyn, is blessed with extremely good judgment and has always been an effective barometer in helping guide my decision-making skills in difficult political situations.

Bad Examples

A person can and does learn from "bad examples," who regularly remind us that the values and qualities needed to be exemplary as a professional in our business often are just the opposite of what they are doing—what we observe as the wrong way to do business will often confirm for us the right way.

What I have noted in particular about these poor role models is their penchant for trying to survive at all costs. This is regardless of the price paid in terms of compromising personal and management values and principles.

I recall, in particular, one city manager who changed policy positions and processes to accommodate individual councilmembers out of concern to not do so would lead to losing his job. Ultimately, he lost the respect of the entire council and his job too.

> For me, mentors are not one or two "influencers" but many.

A Few Reflections

While some of the individual names mentioned above may mean little to the reader, there are qualities that all of these "pros" in life represent. They are smart and courageous, and above all they set high ethical standards. If you have not found that one, lasting adviser, then take heart and remember that you have probably been fortunate, as I have, to have been surrounded by many wonderful human influences throughout your career. Thoughts of these people also are reminders to all of us of the importance of being good mentors ourselves.

Traits of Successful Managers, as Learned from My Own Mentors

In my opinion, successful managers share these characteristics, as demonstrated by those who were for me embodiments of one ideal or another:

Strong sense of personal integrity. Ethical leaders are significant definers of character and conduct in an organization. There is constant scrutiny of their values. The integrity of leaders must be beyond reproach, particularly if they are to set an example for individuals and groups in the organization.

Sense of fairness. Compassionate leaders deal with people fairly and equally. They treat any subordinate

employee with the same respect and values as they would afford someone at a higher level.

Good balance. Secure managers are well balanced emotionally and professionally, with a well-developed sense of personal values. They promote the development of "corporate" values, to ensure that the organization is well balanced, too. Because they understand that the worst disease that can afflict a leader is egotism, they know how to manage their own egos and know that leading is about sharing the credit for the organization's successes.

Sense of humor. Pleasant leaders set a tone for the organization that makes work enjoyable and establish a work environment that encourages happy, relaxed, and productive people.

True concern for people. Supportive managers and department heads understand that nurturing and motivating employees lies at the heart of making an organization effective. They are always thinking about how to make working in the organization a fulfilling experience.

Knowledge of how to cope with difficult people. Good leaders do not shy away from handling troublesome difficult personality types and personnel matters. They understand the necessity of acting in a timely fashion to address people who are not coping well in the organization—for their own good and for the good of those who are performing well.

Encouragement of open communications. High-quality leaders ensure that channels of communication are always open, engaging in dialogue throughout the organization to encourage all managers to practice open communications with their employees. Top managers listen to good and bad news.

Straight talk. Clearly understood managers are straightforward in their communication skills. People do not have to guess what they are talking about. They communicate effectively in writing as well as in speaking and know when to give and ask for feedback. They communicate in a fashion that is simple, direct, and timely.

Good listening ability. Attentive leaders are, first and foremost, good listeners who understand what is on the minds of the people they work with.

Visibility in the organization. Astute managers and department heads are at ease with employees, taking the time to be seen in the organization and to

understand what employees do and what they are concerned about. They remember to thank people for a job well done.

Capacity to build trust. Those with leadership skills establish a work environment where people trust each other.

Capacity to build teams. Good managers understand the inherent value of teamwork and that generally the best performance in an organization is the result of individuals working together.

Courage to act. Courageous leaders set the tone by making hard decisions and moving an organization forward; they set a good example by showing the courage of their own convictions.

Mental toughness. Exemplary managers learn from mistakes and are brutally honest about their own performance. They do not practice self-deception and do not do a Houdini act when the going gets tough.

Political astuteness. Wise leaders understand the political environment and the needs and positions of special interests and policymakers but are careful not to be too political.

Flexibility, innovation, and adaptiveness. Real leaders are willing to try new ideas, tolerate opinions that are different from theirs, take risks, and embrace change. Creative managers encourage employees to try new ideas and accept the risk of failure; they have a high level of tolerance of uncertainty.

Skill at being movers and catalysts. Change-oriented people in authority move an organization forward. They are movers and catalysts for improving the organization, not blockers and hindrances. Good managers make it easier for employees to change with the times and to develop streamlined ways of doing business.

Ability to learn from the past. Regularly, leaders will make the organization more effective by evaluating services and programs and altering, if necessary, the course upon which the organization is embarked.

Mindfulness of the big picture. Visionary leaders engage stakeholders in the organization to help define its mission and goals. Because they see the big picture, they help the organization understand what it stands for and what it is all about.

Willingness to do the small tasks well. Good managers ensure that organizations have an eye for detail

and do the small projects and routine tasks as effectively and efficiently as the major programs.

Skill at evaluating performance. Caring managers and supervisors do timely and thorough performance evaluations. Employees never have to guess how well they are doing. These leaders establish approaches to correct poor performance and reward good performance in a variety of ways.

Effective delegation. High-quality administrators afford employees the opportunity to do meaningful work that is personally rewarding and challenging.

An eye to deadlines. Whenever possible, effective leaders negotiate deadlines among employees and hold them accountable for meeting these deadlines. Of course, they set a good example by meeting their own deadlines and commitments.

Thoughts about the customer. Effective managers understand that virtually anyone inside or outside the organization is a customer. Always trying to maximize the performance of the organization for the good of the customer, they regularly seek feedback from users and clients on how the organization is performing.

Skill in promoting a diverse workforce. Knowledgeable leaders understand the value of a diverse workforce that reflects the customers it serves. They know that this diversity helps the local government better understand and serve its clientele by reflecting the values that exist in the community.

Will to improve organizational effectiveness. Well-organized managers are always looking for ways to streamline processes and procedures, to make the organization more user-friendly and productive. They seek means of producing more with less, or with the same resources.

> Former manager Ralph Hanley used to say that you need three things to be a successful manager: guts, intellect, and integrity.

Analytical ability and decisiveness. These administrators know how to analyze problems by getting the facts, assessing the alternatives, then acting in a prudent and timely fashion to select or recommend a course of action.

Competency. Capable managers and department heads are respected for their knowledge and understanding and for how hard, effectively, and efficiently they work.

Commitment to staff development. Leaders of tomorrow set a tone in the organization by promoting staff development programs that enhance an individual's self-worth and that allow employees sufficient time away from the job so that their skills are constantly updated. And these leaders actively participate in their own continuing education programs.

Good negotiation. Skilled administrators know how to effectively and fairly negotiate among groups and individuals to resolve problems and conflicts.

Knowledge of the organization's finances. Competent managers know the overall financial status of their organizations and communicate it in a straightforward, regular way to their policymakers. Reports clearly explain the revenues, expenditures, reserves, and budget status of an organization. These leaders encourage the preparation and routine review of audit reports and other indices that promote a better understanding of the fiscal condition of the organization.

Les White, Aptos, California (whitelm@pacbell.net), is the former city manager of San Jose and Fullerton, California, and has managed several nonprofit organizations. He is currently semiretired and does interim assignments and consulting for local governments.

What Can Be Done? Attracting Young Adults to Careers in Local Government

by Michele Frisby

This past year, ICMA launched its Building Communities... It's No Small Chore public awareness campaign to help members spread the word about the value that professional local government management brings to our communities. While researching which messages and tools could best be used to educate the public about their local government's operations, ICMA repeatedly heard from members and the public that today's young people have a limited knowledge of how their communities operate and lack an interest in pursuing careers in local government management.

To learn more, ICMA began an investigation into the status of the civic engagement and career choices of high school and college students. During this research, in addition to numerous related studies, the Association found that several other groups, including the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration (NASPAA) and the City Managers' Department of the League of California Cities, already had launched a number of activities designed to reach out to students and new recruits to the field. ICMA also conducted its own survey of two classes of undergraduates at Cleveland State University to test a series of questions that focused on the career choices of young adults.

This article examines the challenges imposed by the changing workforce demographics and their impact on the next generation of public service employees. It also summarizes some of the current research into the amount of local government engagement and the professional choices of high school and college students, while giving an overview of efforts by ICMA, NASPAA, the California League, and other organizations to attract young adults to careers in government.

Challenges Facing the Public Sector

According to a report cited by the Next Generation Working Group of the City Managers' Department, League of California Cities, the "quiet crisis" of attracting bright and talented young people to employment opportunities outside the private sector was recognized as early as 1964. In that year, the Brookings Institution conducted a landmark study that predicted problems for the federal government in competing with businesses to hire highly skilled workers.[1]

While a number of issues contribute to the predicted shortage of talented young people to fill essential public sector positions, of these factors the "age bubble" of retiring baby boomers, the competition for a finite number of gifted job candidates, and changes in the attitudes and workplaces of younger employees are of particular interest to public sector employers.

The Challenges of Advancing Age

As recently as May 2002 during a discussion on "Young Americans' Call to Public Service: The Hart-Teeter Study," Patricia McGinnis, president and CEO of the Council for Excellence in Government, stated: "By 2005, more than half of federal workers will be eligible for retirement, including a very large number of senior executives. And many state and local governments are facing the same set of challenges."

Nowhere are these challenges more obvious than in the field of local government management. In his book *The Rise of the City Manager,* published in 1974,

Richard Stillman compared data from a 1971 survey on the age distribution among city managers with those collected by Clarence Ridley and Orin Nolting in the early 1930s. When we contrast data from these early years with the numbers from ICMA's State of the Profession Survey—Fringe Benefits 2000, conducted in July 2000, it becomes clear that the "greying" of the American population already has had a significant impact on the local government management profession (see Figure 1).

In 1934, for example, 41 percent of the managers surveyed were aged 40 or younger. This percent rose to 71 in 1971, with the entrance of the first wave of baby boomers into the workforce. By the year 2000, however, the portion of appointed managers aged 40 or younger had dropped to only 18 percent.

The percentage of managers aged 51 and above decreased from 22 percent in 1934 to only 8 percent in 1971, justifying Stillman's 1974 comment that "city management has always been a relatively young man's game." Reflecting the impact of the baby boomers, however, by 2000 the proportion of age-51+ managers had jumped to 43 percent, with only 2 percent being under the age of 30.

Local government, like all levels of government, is experiencing the effects of the unprecedented movement through the workplace of a mass of employees born shortly after World War II.

The Challenge of Competing for Talent

In the article "The Human Capital Challenge," published last spring in *The Business of Government* by PricewaterhouseCoopers Endowment, authors Nicole Gardner, Ruby DeMesme, and Mark Abramson observed: "The new conventional wisdom is that all sectors of society are engaged in a 'war for talent.' While the 'supply and demand' of talent tends to fluctuate with changes in the national economy, the key point is that talent can no longer be taken for granted and that all organizations must now engage in competition for the best and brightest in the nation's workforce."

The article describes today's human capital game as being about proactively seeking out qualified candidates, rather than waiting for them to respond to recruitment advertisements.

Remarkably, these shifts are taking place in tandem with a marked rise in young adults' overall trust in government and positive feelings about voting and politics. According to a national study of 1,500 young adults between the ages of 15 and 25, young people's current positive perceptions of government in general are a direct result of the September 11 terrorist attacks, as reported in the March 2002 study *Short-Term Impacts, Long-Term Opportunities: The Political and Civic Engagement of Young Adults in America*.

This study also reported, however, that "young people appear to be more positive about government of late but still aren't keen on pursuing careers in this field." And while government continues to mine schools of public policy and public administration for the best and the brightest, according to Gardner, DeMesme, and Abramson, "Even students who had chosen to obtain a master's degree in public policy [are] now leaning toward seeking employment in the nonprofit or private sectors rather than the public sector."

The Challenges of a Changing Workforce and Workplace

Exactly why are so many of today's young people disillusioned with the actual prospect of a career in local, state, or federal government? One theory focuses on the amount of personal sacrifice demanded by a career in public service. When interviewed in 1990 by Kathleen Branch, a government reporter turned county employee, on the future of public administration, former Calvert County (Maryland) Administrator Jack Upton was described as saying that people entering the field face far greater disincentives than ever before: "With more and more public disclosure and ethics laws, people pay a higher price for entering the profession of public administration. It's not just the fact that they have to live life under public scrutiny but the fact that they are subject to all kinds of liability—even for alleged violations that may not have been legitimate. This can be a real burden and does produce a lot of emotional stress."

A summary of the initial meeting of the Next Generation Working Group in February 2002 also named a number of workforce and workplace characteristics adding to the difficulty of drawing young adults to careers in professional city or county management and retaining them once they are there. These included:

- The attitude of "Generation X" assistant managers and other mid-career professionals in local government who want a balanced life and who shun the onerous demands of a city, town, or county manager's position.

Figure 1. Age Distribution of Appointed Managers

Age	1934	1971	2000
Under 30	7%	26%	2%
31–40	34%	45%	16%
41–50	37%	21%	40%
51–60	19%	5%	37%
Over 60	3%	3%	6%

Note: Percentages for 2000 exceed 100 percent because of rounding.

- Antigovernment sentiment, which leads to fewer college graduates' aspiring to careers in government.
- Inadequate "mentoring" of early- and mid-career employees.
- The highly visible fact that the majority of current managers are white and male.[2]

Gardner, DeMesme, and Abramson, in their report, also cite the changing workplace as a second critical challenge facing government employers. They call for "a [new] workplace in which individuals find fulfillment and satisfaction, and achieve their personal— and the organization's—goals."[3]

Today's young adults are intolerant of the "thick hierarchies, rule-bound processes, and limited opportunities for meaningful work [that] keep government from offering the kind of challenging work necessary to draw and retain top people," says author Paul Light. In *The New Public Service*, published by the Brookings Institution Press in 1999, he discussed a survey of five cohorts of students of public policy and administration programs who graduated between 1973 and 1993.

The study revealed that "these students are turning away from the traditional careers in government service that their predecessors pursued," with fewer than 50 percent of the students choosing government as their first job after college, versus closer to 75 percent 20 years ago.

Rather than shying away altogether from careers in public service, according to Light, the survey respondents were considering alternatives to jobs with the government and instead were looking at the private sector organizations and nonprofit entities with which local, state, and federal governments partner to deliver essential public services. Careers with these "new public service" entities offered the graduates the sense of mission, the flexibility, and the opportunities for growth that appealed to them. Can local government match these offerings?

Current Research

The Hart-Teeter Findings

A study called Young Americans' Call to Public Service, whose research was conducted by the Hart-Teeter research firm in May 2002 for the Council for Excellence in Government, revealed a significant shift in motivation toward government service. A total of 54 percent of respondents cited either "helping people" (38 percent) or "serving community" (16 percent) as the most appealing aspect of a job in government service, compared with 30 percent for helping people and 10 percent for serving community in 1997.

The report went on to say, however, that while young Americans' interest in government service had grown from 35 percent in 1997 to 40 percent in

2002, the percentage of young people who preferred to work in the private sector (66 percent in 1997 and 62 percent in 2002) still significantly outpaced those who preferred to work in public service (24 percent in 1997 and 27 percent in 2002).

Interestingly, the Hart-Teeter study also revealed that, when questioned as to whether anyone had ever asked them to consider working in government while they were in high school or college, only 38 percent of respondents said "yes," while 62 percent said "no." These data may point out significant areas for research and marketing that might be pursued by local governments that want to compete for talented employees.

ICMA's Preliminary Survey Research

In September 2002, ICMA pretested a survey concerning undergraduate career choices. The pretest was administered to 65 students enrolled in two introductory urban affairs classes at Cleveland State University (CSU), and focused on areas of research identified by ICMA staff and the Next Generation Working Group. A breakdown of the CSU undergraduate demographic information is shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4.

The two classes of students surveyed varied in their undergraduate concentrations. The survey choices included political science, other social sciences, public administration, business administration, engineering, information technology, or some other major. Most of the students identified themselves as pursuing majors in business administration (20 percent), engineering (20 percent), or another major not listed, such as pre-law or pre-med (41.5 percent).

Not surprisingly, nearly 51 percent of the respondents indicated that they planned to go on to obtain an advanced degree, with business administration being the largest advanced-degree category (21 percent). Only 6 percent said that they planned to pursue an advanced degree in either political science or public administration.

When asked which career sector they would most likely consider after completing their academic studies:

Figure 2. Ages of Respondents

Ages	Percentage
Under 18	4.8
18–20	46.0
21–25	30.1
26–30	14.3
31+	4.8
Total	**100.0**

Figure 3. Respondents' Gender

Female	44.4%
Male	55.6%
Total	**100.0%**

Figure 4. Respondents' Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	Percentage
African-American	31.7
Asian-American	0
Caucasian	57.1
Hispanic	6.3
Native American	0
Other	4.8
Total	**99.9**

- 43 percent of the students chose the private sector.

- 18.5 percent opted for the public sector (specified as local, state, or federal government).

- 1.5 percent selected the nonprofit sector.

- 37 percent of the students said they didn't know which job sector they planned to pursue after their educations.

Just over one-third (34 percent) of the students said that they had chosen the post-education career sector they would most likely pursue when they were college undergraduates, while others had made the decision either in high school (27 percent) or when they were "very young" (12.5 percent).

Twenty-three percent said that they were "still not entirely certain."

Interestingly, discussions with parents (8.8 percent), specific college classes (15.8 percent), and the career choices of their parents (5.2 percent) had had significantly less influence on these students' choices of career sector than had work experience, defined as summer jobs or internships. Nearly 30 percent of respondents indicated that these work experiences had led them to choose the job sector they eventually planned to pursue as a post-education career.

While 19.3 percent of the students stated that an "attractive starting salary" was the single most important factor for them in considering a career, a total of 28 percent said that either the "opportunity to make a difference within a community" (15.8 percent) or the "opportunity to help others" (12.3 percent) was the most important factor.

One of the most interesting results of the survey involved the students' responses to the notion of a career in local government, which was defined as working for a city, town, or county. While nearly 61 percent of respondents said that they would consider a career in local government, only 13 percent indicated that they had ever considered a career as a city, town, or county manager.

Among those students who had considered a local government career, the "opportunity to make a difference within a community" (28.6 percent) and "attractive starting salaries" (17.1 percent) were the single most influential aspects of a career in this field.

Among those who had not considered local government as an option, 50 percent cited "bureaucratic environment" as the aspect that most turned them off. In general, 41 percent found a career in local government "fairly-to-very appealing," 34.4 percent found it "slightly appealing," and 24.6 percent found it "not at all appealing."

Of the 87 percent of students who had never considered a career as a city, town, or county manager, nearly 23 percent said that they simply had "never considered the possibility." Others cited "don't exactly know what city, town, and county managers do" (20.8 percent), "bureaucratic environment" (16.7 percent), "don't want to work for elected officials" (16.7 percent), and "low salary" (14.6 percent) as other reasons for not considering careers as city, town, or county managers.

Kennedy School Data

In sharp contrast to the findings already described, a September 2002 report that examined 76 graduates of the master's program in public policy at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government revealed that 83 percent of the class of 2002 had accepted positions in public service—the highest percentage in more than 20 years. This figure represents more than a 35 percent increase over the previous year, in which 61 percent of the graduates chose these types of careers.

The fact that more than eight in 10 graduates chose public service careers is noteworthy, despite the study's definition of a public service career as a position with government (63 percent) or a nongovernmental organization (20 percent). Again, the 9/11 terrorist attacks were cited as contributing to the increase. According to John Noble, director of career services at the Kennedy School, "There's a sense that the tragic occurrences of 9/11 may have rekindled a sense of purpose and passion in public sector work."

The data for the entire Kennedy School class of 2002, which includes graduates who earned master's degrees in public administration, public administration/mid-career studies, and public administration/international development, are also noteworthy. Nearly 59 percent of graduates accepted positions in the public sector, 20 percent accepted jobs with nongovernmental organizations, and 21 percent opted for careers in the private sector.

Meeting the Challenges

Clearly, there is no shortage of data and information on the current status of the civic engagement and career choices of America's young people. The challenge facing local governments today becomes how to persuade those talented, intelligent young adults who already possess positive, post–September 11 perceptions of their governments to actively choose a career in public service.

Specifically, how can ICMA members, in partnership with the many organizations currently examining these issues, successfully promote careers in professional local government management?

What's Being Done

The wealth of research into the civic and political engagement and career choices of young Americans has led a number of public interest groups and related organizations—including ICMA—to focus on ways their members can help attract and recruit talented young people to careers in government.

Calling Students to Public Service

In 1998, NASPAA formed the Public Service Careers Initiative Advisory Council to develop a high-profile public relations campaign to "address negative student attitudes toward careers in the public and nonprofit sectors."[4] These attitudes had been revealed through an ambitious study of 970 Phi Beta Kappa seniors and 740 first-year MPA/M.P.P. students randomly selected from 27 schools nationwide.

Commissioned by NASPAA under a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts, the study was conducted by the public administration department of the George Washington University and focused primarily on student interest in careers with the federal government. A few questions, however, discussed local government careers, and these findings revealed that:

- While there was no strong, clear pattern of predictors of motivation toward a career in local government, interest was greatest among those who saw opportunities for personal growth.

- Political science and related majors exhibited the most interest in local government as a career.

- There was less confusion within either the Phi Beta Kappa or the MPA/ M.P.P. student group about the hiring process for local government jobs than there was about the process of applying for a federal position.[5]

The study also showed that "a majority of students feel that government and public decision-making jobs are less attractive career options than working in other fields" and that the lack of interest in these options stemmed, not from apathy or self-absorption, but from the lack of reinforcing messages about the vast opportunities and rewards that a career in public service could offer.[6]

As a result of the study data, in 1999, NASPAA published a tool kit, *Calling Students to Public Service: A Resource for Undergraduate Faculty and Advisors*. In addition to information on student perspectives, internships, obtaining careers in public service, promoting public service, and linking service learning with public service careers, the tool kit included "Look, Ma! I'm a Bureaucrat!"—a glossy, 12-page viewbook that depicted the images and true stories of nine young public service professionals "who are anything but bureaucratic."

NASPAA is currently engaged in a number of other efforts to attract and inform potential students about the various degree programs and diverse career opportunities available to them. One such effort involves the development of a database of NASPAA-member programs, in which the association profiles alumni of MPA/M.P.P. programs. NASPAA also is developing a new brochure that its members can send to potential MPA/M.P.P. students.

Finally, the association has revamped a section of its Web site (http://www.naspaa.org/students/students.asp) as a one-stop location where potential students can learn about public service graduate education, careers, and salaries.

Preparing the Next Generation: A Two-Part Strategy

In February 2002, members of the City Managers' Department of the League of California Cities held the kickoff meeting for a Next Generation Working Group. The group plans to implement a twofold strategy to address the issues identified earlier in this document. The strategy will involve:

1. Grooming professionals already in the pipeline by:

   A. Identifying best practices for preparing early- and mid-career professionals.

   B. Marketing the benefits and rewards of contributing to public service as a city, town, or county manager.

   C. Working with recruiters to "widen the net" when seeking qualified talent from outside the field.

2. Attracting young talent to the field of local government by:

   A. Approaching universities to identify existing data on who is and is not entering public policy and administration graduate programs.

   B. Identifying university professors willing to conduct research into the attitudes of college juniors and seniors toward the public sector.

To further this dual strategy, the Next Generation Working Group also is embarking on the development of marketing and recruitment approaches for college and university students.

Training the Next Generation of Leaders

To "deepen students' understanding of national government, issue advocacy, ethics, and international affairs,"[7] St. Albans School in Washington, D.C.—through a partnership with Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government—has launched a four-week, live-in program designed to immerse high school students in civics and public service.

The St. Albans School of Public Service welcomed its first residential class in the summer of 2002. In explaining the mission of this unique program, the school's director, Mary Ann Waikart, said that the purpose was to increase students' understanding of how they can "translate their passion into meaningful action through careers in public service." The college-level curriculum combines role playing; academic classes; and interaction with political, business, media, and nonprofit leaders through the case-study method that has been successfully integrated into a number of graduate-level courses.

By reaching out to civics and social studies teachers throughout the United States, The School of Public Service at St. Albans plans to create a network of educators who can motivate young people to "make public service their life's work."

ICMA's Internship Tool Kit

ICMA's Executive Board recently directed staff to develop a tool kit on internship programs. Board members believed that more should be done to promote the profession to students and young people, and that internships were a good way to instill the values and traditions of local government management in future leaders. Also, this effort would support the ICMA Strategic Plan, which calls for the Association to develop new ways of recruiting individuals into the profession and ICMA.

In spring 2002, ICMA produced its *Internship Tool Kit* to help members build successful local government internship programs in their communities. Available online as a member benefit, this 48-page document includes:

- Information on which type of internship is right for a local government.
- Guides for setting up undergraduate and graduate programs.
- Advice from local governments that have already established well-run programs.
- Tips on making the internship experience more meaningful, finding the right interns, and budgeting the appropriate resources.
- Information on privacy issues and Fair Labor Standards Act provisions.
- Guidelines for evaluating an internship program and ensuring its continued success.
- Best practices and references.

Appendices to ICMA's *Internship Tool Kit* include sample job descriptions, project proposals, and announcements, plus two *PM* magazine articles on internships and mentoring.

Next Steps: Future Strategies for ICMA

The examples discussed under the headings above are just a sampling of the many activities currently under way to attract and recruit young adults to careers in public service. There are many more, and ICMA will continue to locate and publicize examples of successful or promising programs.

In the meantime, the Association must energize its members and develop additional tools they can use to promote careers in local government. In light of the preliminary data reviewed in this document, ICMA recommends the following strategies for future research and materials development.

Continue to listen to young people. While studies that focus on public service careers with the federal government abound, and while these data and items of information often apply to other levels of government, there has been little research done into what kinds of messages would motivate young adults to focus specifically on careers as professional city, town, or county managers.

While the small sample size and single-city location of the CSU data limit ICMA's ability to generalize to a larger population, the facts (1) that only 13 percent of the students surveyed had considered careers as city, town, or county managers, and (2) that nearly 21 percent did not know what city, town, and county managers do, suggest that additional research into what would motivate students to consider such careers—in the form of a series of national focus-group meetings plus a nationwide survey—seems appropriate.

Reach out to members and friends. Many ICMA members teach classes at local colleges and universities or have developed programs and curriculums geared toward young people. ICMA should tap into the knowledge acquired by these individuals as it decides how best to reach out to young adults.

ICMA might also partner with other organizations—such as NASPAA, California's Next Generation Working Group, National League of Cities, National Association of Counties, National Academy of Public Administration, American Society of Public Administration, National Civic League, and others—to identify areas for joint projects and/or higher visibility for public service careers.

Finally, the Association continues to solicit feedback from members on the direction of this phase of its public awareness activities.

Develop a database of academy curriculum and other successful education efforts geared toward high school and college students. The CSU data suggest that one of the factors of greatest influence for young adults who are considering career choices may be hands-on work experience in the form of summer jobs and internships. While the model promoted by The School of Public Service at St. Albans, which combines direct interaction with public service leaders and academic study, may be ambitious, local governments can achieve similar results by conducting regular youth academies and offering mentorship and internship opportunities. ICMA could provide significant value to members by partnering with other organizations to collect and publicize best practices in these areas.

Develop a marketing tool kit for ICMA members.
As with the *Building Communities . . . It's No Small Chore* tool kit, putting new promotional information directly into the hands of ICMA members would offer an excellent chance to leverage a nationwide network to raise understanding among young adults about the benefits of a career in professional local government management. This guide would explain how to launch a student academy, establish student mentorship/internship programs, and promote these opportunities to young adults throughout a community.

Notes

1 Brintnall, Michael, and Kathryn Newcomer in *Calling Students to Public Service Careers: A Resource for Undergraduate Faculty and Advisors* (NASPAA, 1999). At the time of publication, Michael Brintnall was executive director of the National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration. Kathryn Newcomer, Ph.D., was chairwoman of the department of public administration at the George Washington University, Washington, D.C.

2 "Preparing the Next Generation of Managers." Summary of the first meeting of the Next Generation Working Group formed by the city managers' department, California League of Cities, in February 2002.

3 Gardner, Nicole; DeMesme, Ruby; and Mark A. Abramson in "The Human Capital Challenge," *The Business of Government* (Spring 2002), p. 29.

4 Brintnall and Newcomer in *Calling Students to Public Service Careers*.

5 *Student Attitudes toward Careers in Public Service: Preliminary Highlights* (National Association of Schools of Public Affairs and Administration [NASPAA], 1998).

6 "Public Life for the 21st Century: Hearing What Young People Are Saying," *Calling Students to Public Service Careers*.

7 Johnson, Amy Bell, "Program Uses Innovative Methods to Train Next Generation of Leaders," *Public Administration Times* (Washington, D.C.: American Society of Public Administration, May 2002), p. 4.

Michele Frisby is public information officer and director of the Public Awareness Campaign, International City/County Management Association, Washington, D.C.

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