

2018 ETHICS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Ethics are a core element of ICMA’s mission to advance the profession of local government management. Since the development of our Code of Ethics in 1924, ICMA has built an extensive collection of advice on ethics issues, case studies, and model local government documents. In 2018, ICMA partnered with Sacramento State University to track the current status of ethics standards/policies, staffing, and training in local governments. This survey was distributed to ICMA member chief administrative officers to answer on behalf of their municipalities, counties, councils of governments, and special districts. 838 members completed the survey, yielding a response rate of 27%.

Embedding Ethics in Local Governments

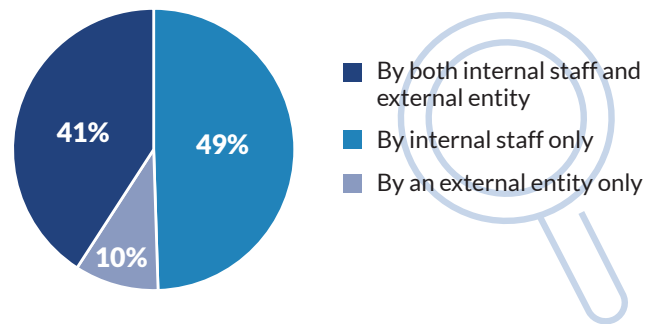
Common Approaches

- 55% of responding local governments have an established process for reporting ethics issues.
- 54% of responding local governments deal with ethical issues and violations as a routine part of their organizational management.
- Nearly half (48%) of responding local governments incorporate ethics in the employee recruitment and selection process.
- Over 90% of local governments use internal staff to investigate ethics issues.

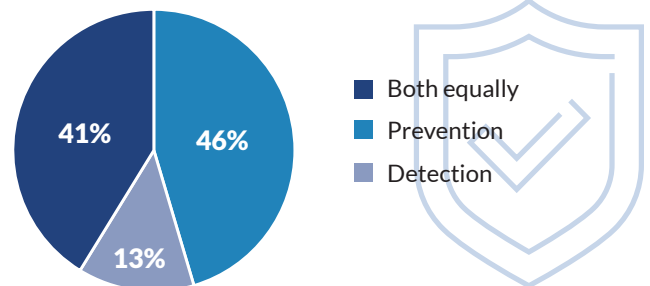
Room to Grow

- Entity-wide ethics offices, commissions, or boards are uncommon for local governments: 13% of respondents reported having one for their organization.
- Just 16% of local governments reported surveying their employees about ethics, ethics compliance, and organizational culture.
- A significant majority of responding local governments indicate a focus on **prevention** of ethical issues. Only a small portion of them focuses on **detection**.
- It is less common, though, for local governments to formally recognize (i.e., reward) ethical behavior. Some feel this is simply a basic expectation or requirement of all employees.

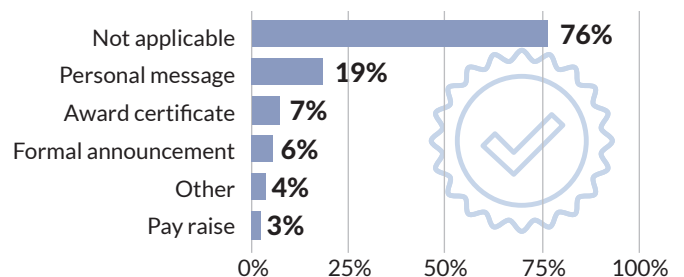
How are ethics issues investigated? (n=713)



Is your local government focused on prevention or detection of ethics issues? (n=621)



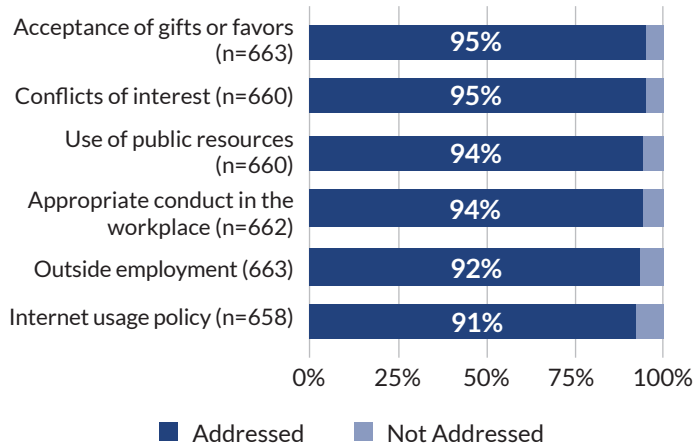
Does your local government recognize ethical behavior with any of the following? (Check all that apply; n=684)



Ethics Issues in Action

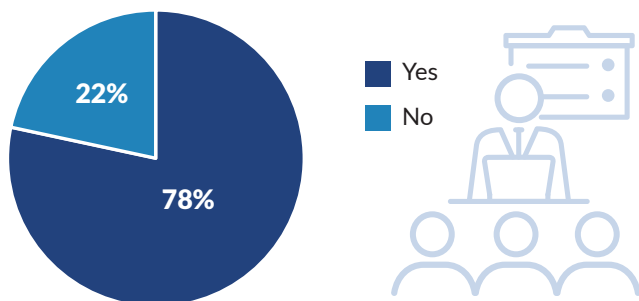
- 63% of local governments have established their own code of ethics/conduct. Of those, 71% were developed with input or leadership from the local government's staff.

Please note whether your local government specifically addresses any of the following in your code of conduct or a separate policy:



- Overall, 78% of responding local governments provide some form of ethics training to elected officials, staff, or board/commission members.
 - Trainings are most often delivered using "in-house" resources (in 66% of responding local governments).

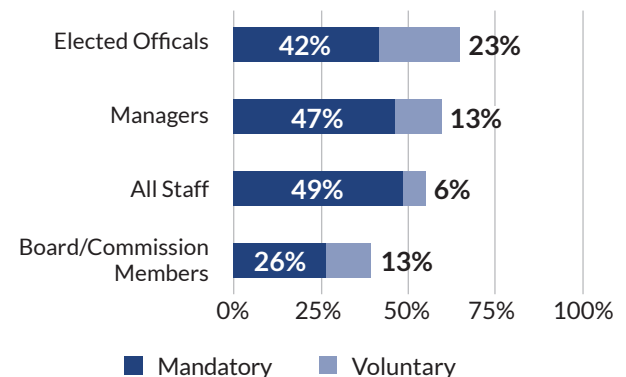
Is ethics training provided to your local government? (n=684)



Local governments most frequently **maintain policies** and **provide trainings** on these ethics topics:



To whom is ethics training provided? (n=536)



For additional information, please contact ICMA survey research at surveyresearch@icma.org.
 To read the full summary report of the Ethics in Local Government Survey, visit www.icma.org/documents/ethics-local-government-survey-report.
 To learn more about ICMA's ethics activities and resources, visit icma.org/ethics.