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State of the Profession, 1998

The *State of the Profession* survey was conducted in the summer of 1998. The survey was mailed to a random sample of those individuals holding manager/CAO and ACAO/assistant managers positions in municipalities and counties. Out of 4,992 municipalities and counties that received surveys, 1,224 responded (24.5%).

For more information on the ICMA's *State of the Profession-Fringe Benefits* survey, please contact [Michele Frisby](#).

Following is the survey text with the aggregate results shown in bold next to each answer. Each answer represents the percentage reporting for that question, except where noted.

1. Please indicate on the following scale the level of support that you receive from your council, board, or commission.

1	2	3	4	5
Highly supportive		Moderately supportive		Not supportive
42.1	35.6	17.9	3.9	.5

2. Describe the relationship between you and your council, board, or commission during the past year.

29.5 Relationship improved **61.7** Relationship remained the same **8.9** Relationship worsened

3. Please indicate on the following scale your opinion of the effectiveness of your council, board, or commission as a decision-making body. Consider the speed and ease with which the members reach consensus, how well they work together, and the degree to which political and personality conflicts interfere.

1	2	3	4	5
Highly effective		Moderately effective		Not effective
18.8	35.2	30.1	12.6	3.3

4. Please indicate on the following scale your level of job satisfaction. In answering, be sure to consider all of the rewards, difficulties, and frustrations you encounter.

1	2	3	4	5
Highly satisfied		Moderately satisfied		Not satisfied
21.2	42.9	28.7	5.7	1.5

5. During the past year, have you been: **4.4** fired **24.4** forced to resign **71.1** under pressure to resign

A. Please check all options that apply to the circumstances surrounding the dismissal.

8.3 1. Poor economic or fiscal conditions blamed on manager	8.3 5. Position abolished due to budget constraints
41.7 2. Personality conflicts with mayor or commissioner	16.7 6. Change in form of government
66.7 3. Political pressures	8.3 7. Other
58.3 4. Changes in elected body following election	

6. During the past year, have you voluntarily changed positions? **10.4** yes **89.6** no

If *yes*, please indicate which of the following attractions was *most* responsible for you changing position.

55.7 1. Career advancement	0.0 4. Gain prestige	3.8 8. Change of climate
3.8 2. Salary increase	8.5 5. Move to larger organization	12.3 9. Family reasons
.9 3. Better benefits including retirement	0.0 6. Move to smaller organization	1.9 10. Sought less
	13.2 7. New experience	

7. How many years have you been in your current position? **6.4 years Average**
 6.6 Managers/Administrators
 5.6 Assistants

8. How would you rate the effect of state laws and regulations on your local government in the following areas?

	Very positive 1	2	Neutral 3	4	Very negative 5
a. Labor relations	6.1	12.9	42.6	29.2	9.2
b. Personnel management	4.3	25.7	42.6	23.5	4.0
c. Financial management	5.6	18.2	31.3	31.5	13.4
d. Planning and development	3.9	26.7	37.4	24.4	7.6
e. Adoption/retention of council-manager fog	11.0	25.4	55.2	6.1	2.2
f. Unfunded mandates	1.2	6.4	19.9	47.3	25.3

9. Which three of the following factors are the most important criteria used by citizens to evaluate the quality of life in their communities.

- 31.5** a. overall economic vitality
- 28.9** b. tax rates
- 10.8** c. access to services from local govt.
- 59.9** d. quality of schools
- 6.0** e. response times (police and fire)
- 21.7** f. crime rates
- 12.2** g. community infrastructure
- 27.8** h. personal safety
- 29.7** i. community's physical appearance and design
- 5.4** j. transportation
- 8.4** k. cost of services provide
- 12.4** l. property values
- 6.0** m. employment rates
- 11.4** n. recreation activities
- 5.0** o. open space
- 3.6** p. environmental management
- 8.0** q. housing values
- 1.1** r. waste collection
- 4.4** s. downtown vitality
- 7.8** t. community growth/no growth policies
- 2.7** u. other

10. Please rate the priority of the following issues in your jurisdiction.

	top priority 1	2	medium priority 3	4	low priority 5
a. Interlocal contracting/contracting for services	3.8	16.3	36.5	21.4	22.0
b. Aging/deteriorating infrastructure	18.7	33.2	27.0	13.1	8.0
c. An expanding tax base and sudden growth	14.6	27.6	22.9	17.2	17.7
d. Drug prevention, enforcement, and related programs	8.3	29.3	39.3	17.8	5.3
e. Providing economic incentives to attract new industry	15.3	30.0	21.5	16.4	16.7

	top priority		medium priority		low priority
	1	2	3	4	5
f. Changes in social/economic characteristics of your community's population (i.e. increase in school-age children)	5.7	19.6	35.8	25.8	13.2
g. Providing a quality educational system	30.3	39.7	20.3	5.9	3.8
h. Welfare reform/workforce training	3.3	10.5	24.4	29.8	32.0
i. Hiring and retaining qualified public employees	8.7	28.3	35.9	18.6	8.5
j. Providing shelter, food, and other programs for the homeless	0.5	3.3	15.4	33.6	47.3
k. Growth management	21.2	28.0	21.3	17.3	12.2
l. A static or declining tax base	12.1	18.8	20.6	22.1	26.5
m. Developing/managing effective youth and family services	3.4	16.0	37.1	28.6	14.9
n. Effective use/management of information technology	8.2	33.4	39.5	15.0	3.9
o. Providing health coverage for employees	6.6	24.1	40.5	20.9	7.9
p. Environmental regulations affecting air, water, brownfields, and environmental justice	6.8	25.0	27.8	21.6	8.7
q. Crime and violence	14.8	33.5	34.8	13.2	3.3
r. Year 2000 (Y2K) computer problems	11.0	23.6	33.8	21.2	10.4
s. Federal/state preemption of local tax sources	17.4	26.4	32.9	18.1	5.2
t. Citizen involvement in local government decision making	12.8	34.9	37.6	11.5	3.2
u. Responding effectively to diversity issues	4.3	19.6	32.8	29.7	13.6
v. Utility, energy management issues	7.9	20.3	32.9	26.6	12.3
w. Other	50.0	30.3	7.6	1.5	10.6

Professional Development

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. Staff effectiveness skills | 9. Diversity skills |
| 2. Policy facilitation skills | 10. Budgeting skills |
| 3. Functional/operational expertise, operational planning skills | 11. Financial analysis skills |
| 4. Citizen service skills | 12. Human resources management skills |
| 5. Quality assurance skills | 13. Strategic planning skills |
| 6. Initiative and risk taking, vision, creativity, innovation | 14. Advocacy and interpersonal skills |
| 7. Technological literacy | 15. Presentation skills |
| 8. Democratic advocacy and citizen participation skills | 16. Media relations skills |
| | 17. Personal, professional, organizational integrity |

Printed above is a list of 17 skills and abilities that are based on the 8 groups of practices for effective local government management, as adopted by the ICMA membership in 1994.

11. Are there any skills and abilities not listed that you feel should be?
- 15.1 yes
84.9 no
12. From the list above, please indicate the numbers corresponding to the two skills and abilities you feel represent your greatest strengths. (Top two choices)
- a. #3 b. #17
13. From the list above, please indicate the numbers corresponding to the two skills and abilities you feel should be your priority for improvement during the coming year. (Top two choices)
- a. #7 b. #13

14. ICMA members are committed to participate annually in a minimum of 40 hours of professional development. Which of the following options have you used during the past year to meet your 40-hour goal?

- 37.2** a. ICMA Annual Conference
- 67.0** b. State association annual conference
- 2.0** c. ICMA Best Practices Symposium
- 58.6** d. Municipal league annual conference
- 10.0** e. College courses
- 7.3** f. ICMA University workshop at State associations conference
- 36.3** g. Private sector training
- 2.1** h. ICMA self-study course(s)
- .4** i. ICMA group-study course(s)
- 5.4** j. ICMA workbook(s)
- 5.5** k. ICMA University pre-, post-, or in-conference workshop(s) during annual conference
- 67.6** l. Keeping up on latest trends through books, journals.
- 18.7** m. Other

15. How many ICMA Annual Conferences have you attended?

- 41.5** None
- 10.3** One
- 20.0** Two to Five
- 11.8** Six to Nine
- 16.6** Ten or more

16. Are you an ICMA member? **79.7** yes **20.3** no