

# Job Hunting Handbook



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# Introduction

Job hunting is a multifaceted fact of life that is faced by virtually every university graduate and local government professional. On the one hand, it can be an exciting process to find a new job, a new community, or a new challenge. On the other, the process can be time-consuming and anxiety-producing. Striking a balance between these two extremes and preparing yourself for the road ahead will require a deliberate approach. No matter where you are in your career, at some point you'll probably need to go about the work of scouting job opportunities, developing application materials, researching a new position and/or community, interviewing, and negotiating a compensation package.

Because job hunting is so universal, ICMA initiates a task force every five to seven years to review and update the organization's Job Hunting Handbook. Members of the 2014 task force are listed on the following page, and this revision is based on their work. Members of the previous task forces are listed in the appendices as the current model is built on the work of many members over the years.

As the last revision acknowledged the need to expand the scope of the prior handbook beyond its focus on

those seeking manager positions, the current revision has incorporated trends in networking and social media.

This handbook is designed for public administration students, recent graduates, and young professionals in their first or second jobs as well as experienced managers who are seeking positions later in their careers. It is also based on the recognition that there are many career paths in local government—that local government professionals may pursue careers as department staff, department heads, assistants, or chief administrative officers (CAOs), and that they may come into local government from other fields.

Although many graduates with an interest in local government follow a relatively straightforward path—administrative assistant, assistant to the manager, assistant manager, manager—others start their careers in a department and either continue in a departmental specialty or make a transition to general management later in their careers.

Whatever your background, experience, and career goals, ICMA hopes this handbook will help you navigate the complexities of job hunting and land the position you want.

# ICMA Task Force on Job Hunting Resources (2013–2014)

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*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*

ICMA is the premier local government leadership and management organization. Its mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advocating professional management of local government worldwide. ICMA provides member support; publications, data, and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to over 9,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals throughout the world.

# Planning

As a member of ICMA, you are fully aware of the rewards of working in local government. Professionals in local government consistently make a difference through the provision of professional, quality service to a community, its residents and businesses. As a local government professional, it is your duty to take proactive responsibility for your own career development and work to create your own opportunities. Your approach to career planning depends on where you are in your career:

- Just starting out?
- Midmanagement?
- Department head, deputy, or assistant manager?
- City or county manager?

Regardless of where you may be, ongoing career planning is essential to a satisfying and successful professional experience.

## Self-assessment

The first step in the planning process is self-assessment, wherein you assess your strengths and weaknesses and identify areas for development. Most professional local government positions require a bachelor's degree and frequently a master's degree—generally in public administration, planning, or finance, depending on the individual's chosen career path. Additional assets are such intangibles as leadership, patience, common sense, flexibility, and a continual quest for learning.

An important part of ICMA's mission is to advance the profession of local government management by providing opportunities for learning and skills enhancement. Through the ICMA University, local government managers and staff have a range of opportunities to increase their professional knowledge and skills. The foundation for all of ICMA's work is the list of Management Practices, a set of competencies and skills developed by ICMA members and considered essential for every local government manager (see Appendix A) As a member of ICMA, you should actively assess your abilities according to the ICMA Management Practices. ICMA's [Applied Knowledge Assessment](#) is one tool that can help in this process.

## Engaging in career planning

Career planning involves looking rather than waiting for new career challenges. It requires that you commit yourself to taking chances. In developing your plan, identify specific goals, actions, and time lines. The goals you set should focus on areas of improvement identified in your self-assessment.

Next, take the initiative to identify a mentor or coach within the profession. Engage that person as a resource, work diligently to maintain a positive and mutually beneficial relationship, and be open to constructive feedback. In addition, network with others in the profession by becoming actively involved and learning about others' experiences.

Begin to identify quality organizations and assignments in which you can gain valuable experience.

Finally, assess your résumé and cover letter, interview preparation and skills, and understanding of compensation issues.

Career planning is an active and ongoing process. Conceive it, believe in it, and then implement it.

## Networking and having a mentor

Pursuing a good career opportunity can be both challenging and rewarding. After an opportunity is identified, there are many phases of the process yet to complete before you may actually be offered that position, and networking can help with this process.

Through the process of networking you can find others in your desired career field. These individuals can help you identify strong opportunities as well as avoid some of the mistakes they made and overcome some of the hurdles they faced earlier in their own careers. On occasion those in your network will notify you of position openings and place a good word to help you land an interview. But even when this does not occur, it is important to recognize that those in your network can still provide many benefits throughout your career, some of which are intangible and may not be realized for many years down the road.

In your network you should strive to include a few experienced and knowledgeable individuals who are willing and able to serve as mentors to help you on

your career journey. A good mentor can help you to identify resources to assist you with various transitions throughout your career, evaluate career opportunities, sharpen your résumé and cover letter, win and prepare for an interview (by providing pointers and conducting mock interviews), identify and correct mistakes, and even put things in a positive perspective so you can turn “failures” into learning opportunities. A great mentor will also help to inspire and motivate you when landing a career opportunity is taking longer than you had expected or not going as smoothly as you had hoped. The process may be humbling, but the growth from the experience is invaluable.

If you are looking for places to expand your network, opportunities exist within ICMA ([ICMA.org](http://ICMA.org)) and the Alliance for Innovation at ([transformgov.org](http://transformgov.org)), at your state city/county management association, at your local American Society for Public Administration (ASPA) chapter ([aspanet.org](http://aspanet.org)), and within your state and local municipal associations. In addition, there are many specialized associations for accounting, budgeting, planning, and other aspects of government.

Once you have started your career and begun to gain experience in your chosen field, it is still important to maintain and expand your network. By doing this, you build value in your portfolio and can bring added value to your organization; it can also be beneficial when you transition to a new organization or advance within your current one. ICMA and the Alliance for Innovation provide cost-effective opportunities for you to maintain and grow your professional network, particular at their annual conferences. The ongoing educational sessions give colleagues the opportunity to interact and discuss issues in a supportive environment.

A great way to honor those in your network who have assisted and mentored you is to be a mentor to others. You can encourage those who are just beginning in their careers and provide assistance to them by sharing how you overcame some of the hurdles you faced when you began. And in so doing, you can help support the ICMA mission “to create excellence in local governance by developing and advocating professional management of local government worldwide.”

# Preparation

Preparation is the key to a successful job search, and the preparation phase includes finding vacancies that you're interested in applying for, doing your homework by learning as much as you can about each position and community, preparing your résumé and cover letter, selecting and contacting professional references, and, if you're seeking a senior position, perhaps making your interest known to an executive recruiter, or "headhunter." You should not feel that you're on your own, adrift in the turbulent sea of job hunting. Whether you're seeking specific leads on available positions or general advice about career options and job-hunting approaches, many resources are available to you.

Before you begin, however, you should reflect for a moment on two factors that are themes throughout this handbook: your responsibilities under the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#) and the strong possibility that your job search will take place at least partly in the public eye.

**Ethics** Integrity and, all being well, a stellar reputation are attributes that you bring to the table along with your education, expertise, and experience. An integral part of a successful job search is maintaining your commitment to the highest ethical standards of the profession. The [ICMA Code of Ethics](#) outlines your professional obligation to present accurate credentials, be respectful of colleagues, keep your word when you accept a position, and commit to serve a minimum of two years' tenure in order to render a professional service (the sidebar on the next page shows the guidelines that apply most directly to job hunting). These obligations apply to *all* ICMA members seeking employment in local government, regardless of position. While this handbook covers in detail those aspects of the Code that specifically address job search issues, it's recommended that you review the entire Code before you launch your search. Even the most seasoned individuals have found themselves in hot water because they hadn't adequately considered the ethical component of decisions they made during career moves.

**Confidentiality** Applicants for positions in the public sector should not have any expectation of confidentiality. Often local governments are required

by law to disclose the names of applicants and/or those who are on the "short list" for interviews. Even if the law doesn't require disclosure, a commitment to transparency, especially in filling very senior positions in the organization, will lead local governments to provide details on potential candidates. You need to be aware of this as you prepare and submit applications, select references, accept invitations for interviews, and visit the new community where you want to work.

## Finding the vacancies

By actively seeking out leads, reading professional publications, and networking, you can begin to identify the right job for you. Resources for identifying job vacancies include current and former local government officials; retired administrators; senior ICMA staff, ICMA Range Riders and Senior Advisors in many states; executive recruiters; ICMA's online [JobCenter](#); state municipal league directors and staff; directors of college and university public administration programs; and various local, regional, state/provincial, and national professional organizations, such as the [National League of Cities](#), the [National Association of Counties](#), the [National Association of County Administrators](#), and the [American Society for Public Administration](#). See Appendix G for a comprehensive list of resources used by local governments for placing job notices.

If you're a recent graduate, resources include MPA program directors, professors, your school's career counseling office, and the [Network of Schools of Public Policy, Affairs, and Administration](#). Depending on your career focus, you may find direct job postings or leads in newsletters, websites, and other communication vehicles of professional associations in planning, human resources, finance, or other areas. In addition, local municipalities post current job openings on their own websites and with regional cooperative listing services. Be aware, however, that municipal job titles will often differ from those in the private sector; for example, a vice president of finance in the private sector could be analogous to a finance director in the public sector. Look closely at the job descriptions to see how your skills and qualifications might best meet those being sought in the public sector.

In addition to these sources, don't underestimate the value of professional networking. If you currently work in local government, your network no doubt includes managers and colleagues in other communities, members of professional associations, and mentors from earlier positions. If you're a student or a recent graduate, a network can include alumni from your school who work in local government. Your network can help you locate job leads, make other connections, gain information about communities and positions, and perhaps help you in the application process.

Finally, for those in midcareer and senior positions, executive search firms (discussed later) are an excellent source of information on career planning, options, and leads. If you make your career plans known to recruiters, they can put you in touch with a wide

range of local governments. When the right job comes up, they can contact you immediately and help you apply for the position.

Your search for vacancies may present you with the first situation in which the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#) applies to the job-hunting process. As you talk with people in your network, you may hear gossip indicating that someone is about to be terminated and that a job is about to become vacant. Unless the incumbent has resigned or been officially notified that his or her services are to be terminated, you should *not* apply for the position.

## Doing your homework

Many jobs aren't listed on job boards, and more and more employers and recruiters are looking for applicants on LinkedIn (see "Social Media" further down

## Job hunting and the ICMA Code of Ethics

The [ICMA Code of Ethics](#) provides guidance for members at every stage of the job-hunting process. The full code is available on the ICMA website. Take particular note of the following guidelines:

**Seeking employment** Members should not seek employment for a position having an incumbent administrator who has not resigned or been officially informed that his or her services are to be terminated.

**Professional respect** Members seeking a management position should show professional respect for persons formerly holding the position or for others who might be applying for the same position. Professional respect does not preclude honest differences of opinion; it does preclude attacking a person's motives or integrity in order to be appointed to a position.

**Credentials** An application for employment . . . should be complete and accurate as to all pertinent details of education, experience, and personal history. Members should recognize that both omissions and inaccuracies must be avoided.

**Appointment commitment** Members who accept an appointment to a position should not fail to report for that position. This does not preclude the possibility of a member considering several offers or seeking several positions at the same time, but once a *bona fide* offer of a position has been accepted, that commitment should be honored. Oral acceptance of an employment offer is considered binding unless the employer makes fundamental changes in terms of employment.

**Length of service** A minimum of two years is generally considered necessary to render a professional service to the local government. A short tenure should be the exception rather than a recurring experience. However, under special circumstances, it may be in the best interests of the local government and the member to separate in a shorter time. Examples of such circumstances would include refusal of the appointing authority to honor commitments concerning conditions of employment, a vote of no confidence in the member, and severe personal problems. It is the responsibility of an applicant for a position to ascertain conditions of employment. Inadequately determining terms of employment prior to arrival does not justify premature termination.



in this section for more information). Once you've identified positions for which you want to apply, your next job is to learn more about them so you can craft a résumé and cover letter tailored for each. Homework includes studying and securing background information on the position, the organization, and the community. ICMA provides a directory of ICMA-recognized governments that it has identified as providing a legal framework conducive to the practice of professional management ([icma.org/recognizedgovernments](http://icma.org/recognizedgovernments)). The effort you put into this homework will benefit you in two ways. First, it will help you determine your "fit" with the organization and community; second, your knowledge of and familiarity with the organization you hope to join will prove you to be a serious candidate during your interview. Realize that if you don't take the time to prepare and other candidates do, it will show.

In years past, applicants relied on information received directly from the potential employer supplemented by hours visiting the local library and researching public documents. Today, the Internet provides information at an applicant's fingertips. When scouring the Internet, you should visit the municipal website and familiarize yourself with the municipality and its leadership, governing body agendas and minutes, organizational chart and budget, capital improvement program, and other documents. Also visit the website of the local newspaper and read random issues to develop an overall picture of the community. Be sure to read the issues published immediately prior to the job vacancy to understand why the job is vacant and what caused the former officeholder to leave, as well as the issues published just before the last election for insight into the makeup of the governing body.

Unless the employing jurisdiction is nearby, a field visit at this stage of the application process may not be realistic, particularly for students or recent graduates. If you can visit the community, however, walk around, stop in at local shops and restaurants, visit the chamber of commerce, and attend a meeting of the governing body. Familiarize yourself with the general history of the area and brush up on current events and significant projects.

Many of the sources suggested earlier in the section "Finding the vacancies" can also provide information. Tap your personal network for colleagues from nearby communities or the same state, and see what you can learn from them. People in your professional associations who are familiar with the community and the position can provide helpful advice and information:

even if you don't know them personally, don't hesitate to contact them to get their perspectives.

The information that you'll need and the extent of research that you'll do will depend on the type of position in which you're interested. You should, however, learn as much as you can about the position, organization, and community regardless of the level of the position.

## TIP

- Interview the school superintendent, the chamber director, and business leaders.
- Contact state league staff/state manager associations, and managers in neighboring communities.
- Read the local newspaper online.
- Delve into data, such as employment surveys of the metropolitan statistical area, indicators of the jurisdiction's economic health, and comparative compensation in other industries.

## Your résumé

"You have ten seconds to make an impression." While preparing your résumé and the accompanying cover letter may be your first step in responding to a job opportunity, it's not the first step in the recruitment process. That first step has already been taken by the organization offering employment. As a result, the advertisement to which you're responding has been carefully and subtly crafted to yield a pool of candidates who not only qualify for the position but also fit the organization and its needs. It is your primary written vehicle for showcasing yourself by

- presenting your overall qualifications
- communicating your experience
- highlighting your accomplishments
- describing relevant skills.

Your résumé is the document that permits the employer to compare you with other applicants. It is also the means by which you make your first impression. When you're an applicant, the résumé and cover letter are the only elements in the recruitment process entirely within your control.

The people who review your application can be just as influenced by the appearance and organization of

your résumé and cover letter as they are by your actual experience. These documents offer you an opportunity to create a great first impression and to distinguish yourself from the other applicants in the minds of the reviewers.

## What should a résumé do?

Your résumé should help you stand out from the competition and be invited for an interview. The first hurdle, of course, is to demonstrate that you're qualified for the job. If your résumé shows that you meet the minimum requirements, it will go into the stack reserved for qualified applicants. A subsequent screening of the résumés will result in a smaller group of candidates for further review and consideration and, ultimately, a preliminary interview.

The initial review of a résumé might be done in a matter of seconds, and the decision to give further consideration to a particular applicant will largely depend on the impression and information conveyed by the résumé. In some cases, résumés are placed in databases and searched by key words to narrow the field of applicants.

It's no easy trick to prepare a résumé that will stand out from the others and inspire someone to invite you for an interview. You may have the necessary credentials, but if your résumé doesn't convey this, you won't be interviewed.

Don't expect anyone reading your résumé to do your work for you and to read between the lines. The résumé must

- communicate both your track record and your personality
- demonstrate that you're organized and conduct your affairs in a businesslike fashion
- send positive messages about your abilities
- illustrate that you are current and innovative in your professional field.

Your résumé should suggest whether your experience has been broad or narrow and whether your efforts have resulted in significant accomplishments. It should provide clues about your management and supervisory capabilities, and it should indicate that you are career oriented and stable. Finally, it should provide insights into your career growth, professional achievements and skills, and personal management style.

When it comes to conveying specific, factual information about your background and experience, the résumé should put you and your background in perspective. Among other things, it should provide a clear, consistent, and understandable profile of your

- education
- previous employers
- other work-related activities
- scope of responsibility and accomplishments.

If you're a recent graduate and/or have little professional experience at this point in your career, you can include experience in internships, summer employment, significant class projects, and relevant extracurricular or volunteer activities as examples.

## Who will review my résumé?

Depending on the situation, résumés may be read and screened by either a professional or a layperson. Possible reviewers include personnel specialists, selection committees, local government administrators or department heads, elected officials, and executive recruiters. On the basis of their individual backgrounds, perceptions of the position, educational history, and other variables, each reviewer draws his or her own conclusions as to whether your résumé should be selected for further consideration.

When you apply for a position, be aware that in some places your application materials, including résumé, cover letter, salary history, and references, may be considered public documents available and open to review. In these cases, especially for high-profile positions such as city or county manager, local media in the jurisdiction to which you're applying may review your application materials and contact your current or past employers. You should make a point of finding out in advance whether your application could become public. If it could, and if you still choose to apply, be prepared to answer questions from the media—and from your current employer.

## How do I write a résumé?

Set aside quality, uninterrupted time to prepare your résumé. Begin by assembling a rough draft of basic facts, such as

- your contact information
- your employment history (including summer jobs, if you're a recent graduate)
- your education.

Next, reflect on each position you've held and list your roles, responsibilities, and key professional accomplishments for each. You'll probably end up with a lengthy list, which you can draw on to create a "basic" résumé.

Your basic résumé should, of course, honestly portray your experience and accomplishments. Importantly, however, when you plan to apply for a specific position, your résumé should be tailored to that position so that the person who reviews it can see that you meet the candidate profile. When applying for a position, begin with your basic résumé and then tailor it accordingly so that you present yourself as a more attractive candidate for the position.

As you write your résumé and prepare your other application materials, keep in mind the following ICMA Code of Ethics guideline: “An application for employment . . . should be complete and accurate as to all pertinent details of education, experience, and personal history. Members should recognize that both omissions and inaccuracies must be avoided.” The ICMA Committee on Professional Conduct, which enforces the Code, takes this guideline very seriously, and members have been censured for misrepresenting their educational attainments or omitting jobs from their résumés. Short tenures in a position or organization, regardless of the cause, should be included in your résumé.

## What format is most effective?

In most situations, the *chronological résumé* is the best choice for the local government applicant. This format paints a clear picture of your job history by placing your work experience in reverse chronological order (with the current or most recent job appearing first) by employer. Its easily understood format tells the reader where you’ve been professionally and what you’ve accomplished.

The *functional résumé* arranges your work experience according to general areas of proven ability in the organizations that have employed you rather than according to a time frame. The functional résumé is recommended only if your level of experience is so great that you cannot cover it chronologically in the space of two or three pages. Even then, think twice before using any format other than the chronological résumé. And be sure not to omit positions from a listing of your experience.

While some employers continue to accept résumés by regular mail, most now have a preference for electronic submittal. Thus, job seekers should be prepared to forward résumés and other application materials to prospective employers electronically. The cover letter and résumé should be in a Word or Adobe format and attached to an electronic message.

If a hard-copy résumé is required, it should be prepared on a computer in a current Word format and

printed on high-quality white or ivory paper using a laser jet printer. Above all, it should look neat, businesslike, and professional. “Mass-produced” résumés are not recommended. If your résumé appears to have been printed in quantity, the reviewer will probably believe that you are engaged in a wide-ranging search and are not serious about the specific position. You want your résumé to look as if you prepared it individually for each job.

## How long should my résumé be?

As a general guideline, the résumé should be complete without being burdensome. Bear in mind that the reviewer may be reading a large number of résumés, and the more effort he or she has to put into reading a résumé, the less chance it has of ending up in the interview stack. But take care not to sacrifice clarity in an effort to save space. Spell out abbreviations on first use (except perhaps for state names), and be sure not to use “shorthand” that the reader may not understand.

If you’re a recent graduate, or if your years of experience are fairly minimal, a one-page résumé may suffice. Typically, however, an experienced candidate cannot sufficiently cover all of his or her work history and education on a single page. Furthermore, a single-page résumé stands a higher chance of being overlooked or accidentally attached to the back of another applicant’s résumé. A standard professional résumé is two to three pages in length, which is sufficient to convey current and past experience, accomplishments, and education. A lengthier résumé may give the reviewer the impression that the candidate is unable to deliver information concisely.

## What does a basic résumé include?

Your résumé needs to anticipate and answer questions that a prospective employer will have when considering applicants. It’s important to include key items of information so that your experience, responsibilities, and accomplishments are clear. When the reviewer reads your résumé, there should be no question about

- where you went to school
- what degrees you received
- your current/recent and past work experience, which should include
  - the name and contact information of each employer

- your job title
- your dates of employment
- your professional and related activities.

Traditionally, a “Career Objective” section was used at the top of the résumé. A more modern approach might be to include a brief professional profile that summarizes your career. Guidelines for preparing a chronological résumé are presented in the following paragraphs, and a sample résumé appears in Appendix B.

**Contact information** Your name, mailing address, personal e-mail address, and phone number(s) should appear at the top of the résumé and on each subsequent page. This information can appear in a style of your preference, but it is recommended that it be in a larger font, centered, and bold. The last thing you want a reviewer to forget about you is your name. It’s fairly common for an employer to contact candidates electronically, so you should provide a personal e-mail address that you check regularly. Phone numbers (with area code) may specify your work, home, and mobile information. It’s wise to review your outgoing voice message on each of these contact numbers to ensure that it presents you in a professional manner.

**Education** List your academic degrees and other educational accomplishments in reverse chronological (newest to oldest) order. This information should indicate the school(s) you attended, your major or principal course of study, and the degree(s) you received. If you’re currently pursuing a degree, make it very clear that the degree has not yet been awarded. It is not necessary, nor is it recommended, to list your education prior to college. If you’re a recent graduate, you may want to note your grade point average and provide examples of relevant courses. For applicants with significant experience, information about your grade point average is not essential, but you may wish to include such academic honors as graduating summa cum laude, membership in Phi Beta Kappa, or significant scholarships or fellowships.

If you’ve been working for a number of years, it’s important to show that you keep up-to-date with current management practices and issues in public administration and that your education is continuing. Don’t waste space on your résumé listing minor seminars and workshop sessions that you’ve attended, but do selectively reference relevant coursework or educational activity after college. For example, it’s

important to note participation in programs at the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, the Senior Executive Institute at the University of Virginia, and other recognized programs. Your goal is to show some familiarity with relevant subject matter and to demonstrate a pattern of continuing education. Education is often put below professional experience if such experience has been extensive.

**Professional experience** Your work experience represents the most important part of your résumé. In reverse chronological order, summarize your career history. Devote a paragraph to each position you have held, providing the most detail for your current or most recent job and placing less emphasis on positions you held earlier in your career. Use numbers and facts, if possible. Each listing in the “Professional Experience” section should provide the reader with an overview of your responsibilities and duties, and illustrate your accomplishments and effectiveness.

Recent graduates can include internships, college jobs, summer jobs, and similar experiences as part of their career history, highlighting the relevance of that background to the position for which they are applying. More seasoned applicants can reference other experiences that are relevant to their careers, but they should not list information regarding high school, college, or part-time jobs unless there is a substantive reason for doing so.

When providing information about current and previous work experience, focus on your principal responsibilities (those areas for which you are or have been responsible and that you’re capable of handling) and accomplishments (what you’ve actually done). You should highlight the variety of experiences you’ve had, but do not include a job description or a narrative from a class specification. Similarly, do not talk in general terms. Position titles may not adequately describe your duties and responsibilities, so be specific and relate your responsibilities and accomplishments to particular employers and positions. Be concise and use action verbs (e.g., developed, supervised, and implemented).

Provide the following information for current and past employers:

- Name and location of employer
- Title of your position
- Dates of employment (provide both the month and year to avoid any suggestion that you’re trying to hide a gap in employment)

- Relevant data about the employer (e.g., city or county population, services provided, number of employees, size of budget)
- Information about your area and scope of responsibility (e.g., reporting structure, services provided, number of employees supervised, and size of budget for which you are/were responsible), including specific examples
- Accomplishments, including specific examples (this is where you have the opportunity to tailor your résumé to the position for which you are applying).

Again, information on current and past work experience should be complete without being burdensome. If you have had short tenure in a position, you may choose to include a brief explanation for leaving it.

**Professional activities** List professional activities that demonstrate the nature of your administrative leadership skills and your involvement, activity, and leadership in the profession in general. Include membership in related professional organizations and any articles and publications that you have authored. Unless you have very few years of experience, don't list every speech you've given, every conference you've attended, every course you've taught, or every certificate you've received. Again, it's important to be selective. List the most important activities, the nature of the activity, the offices held, and/or the honors received. In summary, this section should suggest that you have a commitment to the profession. If space permits, a simple listing of significant memberships can be helpful and impressive.

**Military service** If you held a military commission or a professional assignment, you may wish to include it in the professional experience section of the résumé, and you can list significant service assignments, activities, and awards. If you did not serve in any capacity that is significant in terms of professional development, you should include only your service dates.

**References** Unless specifically required in the application process, do not list references within your résumé. You may say "References available upon request." It's a fairly standard practice for employers to obtain a signed release from the applicant prior to contacting references. This release designates specific individuals named by the applicant who may be contacted.

If you choose to include references along with your résumé, prepare a separate page with their names and

contact information. As mentioned earlier, depending on state laws, application materials may become public documents open to inspection by local media who are not bashful about contacting current employers or references. Consider the potential negative consequences of submitting references in advance of an interview offer or an offer of employment.

For further information on references, see the section titled "Selecting your Professional References."

**No personal information and photographs** There is no value in including personal data in the body of the résumé. It detracts from your message, and it places the résumé reviewer in the awkward position of having access to information that he or she otherwise is legally prevented from requesting. Photographs are not necessary and not recommended.

**Attachments** As a rule, the only attachments that should be included with your résumé are those specifically requested by the prospective employer. Unnecessary attachments may have a negative effect on your consideration for the position. If you use attachments, keep them to a minimum and be sure they are relevant, recent, and of specific interest. Do not attach letters of reference or recommendation, college transcripts, or certificates, but if you're a recent graduate, be prepared for a prospective employer to ask you to arrange for a transcript to be sent.

**Keeping your résumé current** Experienced professionals know that it's a good idea to keep a résumé current. Although you may not be actively seeking new employment opportunities, keep a list of special projects and assignments, successes, and accomplishments so that you'll be prepared to update your résumé if and when it becomes necessary.

## Your cover letter

The cover letter tells the reader who you are, indicates your interest in the position, and briefly shows how your professional accomplishments, interests, and skills match the needs of the position. The cover letter is nearly as important as the résumé; in many cases, the reviewer will not even read a résumé unless it is accompanied by a cover letter.

A good cover letter will impress the reader not only with your skills and experience, but also with your understanding of the organization and the position, thereby improving your chances of "winning" this first round of the competition. Your goal at this point

is to have your résumé considered carefully and to be invited for an interview. Again, you need to make yourself stand out from the crowd and show why you're a top candidate. For this reason, your cover letter should be an original work.

## How do I prepare the cover letter?

Like the résumé, your cover letter should be neat and businesslike, give a good first impression, and be tailored to the specific position for which you're applying and to the community where it's offered. It should direct the reader's attention to the particular skills and accomplishments that make you a strong candidate for the job. See Appendix C for a sample cover letter.

To customize your letter, draw on the information you gathered about the community in the "home-work" phase described earlier.

Address the cover letter to the appropriate person by name, not just by title. If the job advertisement doesn't give the name, call the listing organization and try to obtain it. The letter should be simple, clear, and no more than one and one-half pages long. Use frequent paragraph breaks for easy reading. Because of the length limitation, you will have to put considerable thought into writing and editing it. In the first sentence, you should attempt to attract the attention of the reader by noting the single accomplishment that best illustrates what you have achieved professionally. In the following sentences, list five or six other significant accomplishments that are most relevant to the community to which you are applying. The reader should want to read your résumé. Indicate your enthusiasm for the position and "ask for the job"!

As noted earlier, many employers now request electronic applications, with the cover letter and résumé attached to an e-mail message. However, if the letter and résumé are sent by "snail mail," print the cover letter on plain white or ivory paper or on personal (not business) stationery. Be sure to mark the envelope "Confidential."

## Are my résumé and cover letter ready to send?

Be aware that you will draft and edit your résumé and cover letter numerous times before you end up with a good product. Take no pride in authorship. Have a professional associate or a career adviser give your final draft a critical review. If that person says it looks fine, give it to someone else who can be more critical and who can read it from the viewpoint of a prospective employer.

It goes without saying that your résumé and cover letter must be correct in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. A misplaced word or poor grammar in your application materials is a quick route to the "reject" stack; in fact, typographical and grammatical errors are the most common reasons for rejection of an applicant's qualifications.

## Selecting your professional references

No matter how you decide to handle professional references at the initial phase of your job search, select your references with thought and care. They should include individuals who are

- distinguished in your organization, your community, and/or professional circles
- knowledgeable about your professional accomplishments and work style
- knowledgeable about your personal character
- knowledgeable about your career objectives and why you have applied for the position
- willing and available to give a reference and articulate in doing so
- willing and able to maintain confidentiality.

## Whom should I ask to serve as a reference?

Ideally, your references should be individuals who can comment on your skills, your effectiveness in dealing with people, your personal qualities, and, if you're an experienced manager, your community standing, your professional reputation, and your financial management abilities. More specifically, you want your references to be professionals with high integrity who are advocates of your strengths and abilities while providing candid and honest feedback. It's not likely that every reference will be able to meet all of these criteria, but in combination they should be able to.

Take care not to provide references with whom you have not communicated in recent years. In addition, do not provide personal references (relatives, neighbors, clergy, etc.) unless specifically asked to do so. And don't be tempted to "name drop."

Be sure to ask individuals' permission to list them as references. If you don't, they'll be caught unaware when contacted. Be sure to explain to your references your desire for the job, your future interests, and any new accomplishments of which they may not be aware. Provide them with a copy of your résumé to

furnish additional information about your background and make it easier for them to respond to questions from a prospective employer. Your references should be willing to comment on both your positive and your negative attributes. Make it clear that you want them to give honest opinions.

Just as you tailored your résumé to fit each specific position, you must carefully select your references for each application. For example, if you currently work in general administration and are seeking a position as a human resource (HR) director, try to identify an HR professional who has worked with you and who can speak to your proficiency in that area. It may be appropriate to include a former subordinate if your new job will be a supervisory position.

Rotate your references, especially if you're applying for several positions during a short period of time. This is important not only because you should select references based on the skills you want to spotlight for each particular position but also because it's common courtesy to value your references' time and not have two or three people contacted by every potential employer.

As you think about the best references, consider also when you will notify your current employer that you are seeking another position. From a tactical perspective, it's best if your employer hears the news from you rather than from an elected official, staff member, or reporter! Depending on the level of confidentiality you hope to maintain, you may not want to list references from your current place of employment yet. If this is the case, be specific, asking the prospective employer to refrain from contacting your current employer at this point in the process.

Your references will change depending on your career status. Following are suggestions for professionals at different stages of their careers.

**Recent graduates** If you're a recent graduate and have little or no work experience in the field, don't overlook the many people who can comment on your work ethic, communication skills, technical abilities, and professional goals. Consider current or former professors, faculty advisers, leaders from community or volunteer organizations, and even peers. Whether you worked at a fast-food restaurant or a chemistry lab in the past, former supervisors from any field can provide potential employers with insight into your abilities.

**Emerging leaders, new professionals, non-CAOs** If you're a department head or assistant manager, use your boss as a reference if you can. If you're doing a

good job, this should not be a problem. If for some reason you can't or don't want to use your boss, seek the assistance of another local government executive. Someone in your field should always be named as a reference to comment on your professional attributes. Colleagues, department heads, professionals in other communities who may have worked with you on projects, and business leaders or other professionals who have worked with you in the community can also be good sources.

**Experienced executives** If you're a manager applying for another manager position, you can be sure that the prospective employer will want to discuss your performance with a member of your current governing body. Rarely will a governing body hire a new administrator without talking to the current employer. While this is often uncomfortable, the best thing you can do is to be prepared for it. As noted above, it's best to disclose your candidacy for a position to your governing body (at a minimum to the mayor or chair) before its members hear the news from another source. It's also acceptable to ask the mayor, chair, or another governing body member who supports your desire for career advancement to serve as a reference.

**Career changers** If you're a career manager seeking to move from another field into local government, provide the typical references from former supervisors, boards of directors, and colleagues. If you have experience working with cities or counties or the broader public, include references who can spotlight your work in those areas.

**Managers "in transition"** If you're a manager "in transition" who has resigned under pressure or been fired, be sure to offer to provide references who can verify your explanation of events leading to your resignation or termination. These references may be separate and distinct from your position-specific references.

## What information should I provide regarding my references?

Whether you provide reference information with your résumé or later in the recruitment process, key information should include the person's name, position, employer, e-mail address, and telephone number(s). Verify contact information to ensure that it's correct. In addition, provide a description or explanation of

your relationship to the reference: boss, colleague, peer, governing body member, community representative, subordinate. Do not make it difficult for the prospective employer to contact your references.

## Maintaining your references

A critical part of developing a good reference is maintaining one. Update your references regularly on how your search is progressing. When you're contacted by prospective employers or invited for interviews, let your references know. A good reference will be interested in your progress. Remember that many of your references are active in the field and can provide job leads and encouragement during your search.

Don't forget to thank your references promptly and frequently. When you finally land that position you've been trying for, let them know so they can share the celebration. A good reference can make all the difference in the final selection.

## Social media

Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Google+ allow employers to get a glimpse of who you are outside the confines of a résumé, cover letter, or interview. These social media sites also offer job seekers the opportunity to learn about entities they're interested in, connect with current and former employees, and hear about job openings instantaneously.

## In the public eye

Many employers use social networks to screen potential job candidates: they will browse your social media profiles to evaluate your character and personality. Employers often use social networks to see if candidates

- present themselves professionally
- are a good fit for the organization's culture
- are well-rounded and have a range of interests.

Some employers even base their hiring decision on what they find. Applicants have been removed from a candidate pool because their profiles contained provocative or inappropriate photos and information; evidence of drinking and/or drug use; examples of poor communication skills; negative comments about previous/current employers; discriminatory or political comments; or lies about qualifications.

Think of your social media profiles as extensions of your résumé! Here are some tips for keeping your online "résumé" professional:

- Remember that everything you put on social media lives forever. You may delete it. You may hide it. But sites such as Google, Facebook, and Twitter often back up content. Plus, it only takes a second to create a screenshot of a social media page before it is deleted. If you put something online, consider it permanent. Before posting anything online—whether on your account or someone else's—ask yourself if it abides by the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#) and think how it could look to a potential employer.
- Be conscious when mixing your business and personal lives. Personal and business personas often intersect online. Everything that is posted online—even when profiles are "private" or "protected"—can still ultimately be seen through sharing, forwarding, or screenshots. Make sure that what's out there is something you'd be comfortable talking about in a job interview.
- Consider everyone a reporter. Thanks to cell phones, everyone now carries a camera and microphone. Be cognizant that public service means you are in the public eye, no matter where you are. Photos or videos can be uploaded to social media sites within seconds and become a permanent record.
- Don't fall victim to "tagging." You have gone to great lengths to establish your social media brand, only to have it tarnished by your friends. In addition to politely asking your friends to not tag you in potentially negative photos, you can also adjust your settings so that anyone who tags you in a picture has to ask for permission first.
- Be aware of who you "friend," follow, or connect with on social media. If someone is likely to post inappropriate content on your page—or if their connection with you could negatively affect your reputation—it's best to avoid them. Before you ask someone to connect, consider what you have in

## TIP

As stated in the Ethics Matters column on the June 2010 edition of *PM* magazine: "Consider the principles of Tenet 3 of the ICMA Code of Ethics, which encourage members to conduct themselves in all professional and personal matters in a manner that promotes public confidence in the profession."



common. That common denominator, regardless of what it is, is what's going to help with (or hinder) your job search.

- Be careful using personal social media accounts during work hours, as organizations vary on their policies. Frequent use during work hours may cause concern for some employers.

## Best foot forward

Social media can be a great opportunity to create a personal brand online. Here are some tips on putting your best foot forward:

- Research different platforms, including Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Indeed, Vizify, Prezi, and blogs. New programs are seemingly created every day!
- Use the same professional picture, username, and bio for your accounts to create a unified message.
- Ensure that your profiles are well written and free of typos.
- Create a personal overview that covers your previous experience and current career goals. This information should always be consistent.
- Be careful what you tweet and retweet. Tweets show up in a Google search.
- Social media is supposed to be social, so interact! Joining online conversations helps you keep up-to-date on issues, meet helpful contacts and showcase your expertise in your field. If you take this approach, remember to proofread your content and check your facts.
- Follow local government entities and organizations online. That way, you can keep track of what's going on and show your interest.
- When creating a [LinkedIn](#) account, write a strong summary that includes keywords and phrases that your potential employers would look for. Many jobs aren't listed on job boards, and more and more employers and recruiters are looking for applicants on LinkedIn by searching for those keywords. Ask your references to endorse you on your LinkedIn account.
- Keep your accounts current.
- Don't refer to yourself in your LinkedIn profile or Twitter headline as "unemployed" or "job seeker." Instead, identify who you are professionally in terms of the type of position you're looking for.
- Build a diverse network, even when you're not actively looking for work. If you wait until you find

yourself out of a job, it will be a lot harder to build that network.

- Google yourself often! You can be certain that recruiters will Google your name when considering you for a position. If you don't like your search results, try creating a LinkedIn profile. Completely fill out your profile and become active on the network. That will help push your profile to the top of Google's search results. Also create a professional Google+ account: it helps boost your search results.
- Include your social media handles, URLs, etc., on your résumé.
- Start following agencies, cities, counties, etc., that you are interested in working for someday. The more you know about these organizations now, the more prepared you'll be during interviews.

## Working with executive search firms

More and more employers and job seekers for senior management positions are using the services of an executive search consultant, or "headhunter," to assist in the recruitment for city/county positions. Executive search consultants are personnel experts who are retained by the public employer to actively recruit and screen qualified applicants for a position. They can be a valuable resource to public managers, particularly if they follow certain professional practices and procedures and understand the importance of the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#).

Executive recruiters work on behalf of their client governments or agencies rather than for candidates. A search firm may offer its services nationwide, or it may focus on a particular geographic region and/or industry specialty. Each search firm offers different types of services and different approaches to job recruitments. It is important for candidates to research and understand these differences in order to effectively compete for public management positions.

The use of executive search firms in the field of local government began in the mid-1970s. Today, with the increasing number of baby boomers retiring and the resulting competition for qualified applicants in local government, cities and counties often opt for the services of search firms to help them market job opportunities and identify and recruit qualified candidates. In addition, many city council members have never been involved in the recruitment for senior public management positions. Executive search firms

provide some needed expertise that often helps create a more professional and timely recruitment process.

ICMA maintains a list of executive search firms available to communities seeking assistance with their search. For more information, please visit [icma.org/execsearch](http://icma.org/execsearch).

ICMA Range Riders are sometimes asked by local governments to assist with recruiting a new manager or to help in the selection of an executive search firm. Range Riders—retired managers with extensive experience—volunteer their time to provide a unique source of outside counsel to city and county managers and administrators. Range Riders are available to meet periodically with ICMA members to discuss the profession and concerns of managers, including career development. There are Range Riders in 22 states. Learn more about them at [icma.org/rangeriders](http://icma.org/rangeriders).

## Why do local governments use executive recruiters?

Although executive searches can be performed by in-house HR departments, many local governments find that employing an executive search firm is more expedient, efficient, and effective, especially when they need to fill an important position on the management team. Executive recruiters can offer confidentiality, a network of contacts, objectivity in evaluating candidates, and experience in negotiating terms of employment.

In deciding whether to use an executive search firm, the employer normally weighs the cost of using a firm against the cost of preparing and executing an advertisement/recruitment campaign, screening and qualifying candidates, and operating without a key employee for an extended length of time. Often they conclude that the cost is a good investment, particularly when considering the importance of filling key management positions with highly qualified individuals as soon as is practical.

## What is the role of a headhunter?

Executive recruitment firms are retained by, and work on behalf of, employers. While the majority of local government recruiters maintain collaborative working relationships with candidates, their client is the local government, and they represent their client in all aspects of the search process. They do not work on behalf of candidates.

That said, local government professionals should keep in mind that executive recruiters can be a valuable resource in their career growth. Establishing and

maintaining a positive relationship with recruiters can benefit you by providing a sounding board for career guidance, assistance in résumé preparation, constructive feedback on interview skills, and an assessment of your strengths and experience gaps. In maintaining this relationship, it is critical that public managers recognize the importance of dealing with the recruitment firm in an open and honest manner at all times. Also, public managers should never present any surprises or misinformation that could cause long-term damage to this working relationship.

## How does the executive search process work?

Once the employer has selected a firm, the multistep process of professional recruiting begins. Each step is managed by the search firm in partnership with the client:

- Evaluation of the position and employment need
- Creation of a job profile for the position
- Outreach through advertising, direct marketing, and networking
- Candidate screening and evaluation
- Preliminary interviews
- Reference and background checks
- “Short list” recommendations to the employer
- Finalist interviews
- Selection and negotiations.

The search begins with an evaluation of the employer’s need with regard to the position. The search firm works with the local government to arrive at an understanding of the organization and its culture, the community, and specifics of the position to be filled. The purpose is to identify the major goals and issues of the organization and community and to develop a consensus profile of the “ideal” candidate for the position. This profile includes academic credentials, professional qualifications, job experience, personality, and leadership and management style. It should also include a history of the position, including the tenure of the previous manager and the reason for the current vacancy. The profile is then used to market the position to prospective candidates.

To recruit candidates, the firm places advertisements in appropriate professional publications and websites. It then engages in research and networking—contacting existing sources, pursuing leads, contacting prospective candidates, and beginning to screen the most promising ones. The firm personally interviews the leading candi-

dates and conducts reference and background checks. Many times the firm uses an extensive questionnaire to narrow down the candidates.

The search firm generally provides the employer with a list of all applicants for the position as well as a “short list” of recommended candidates for further consideration. It’s important to recognize that many applicants are eliminated from continued consideration, not because they are unqualified but because they may not fit the recruitment profile or because other candidates have better credentials.

The employer then selects finalists, and the recruiter arranges for interviews. The recruiter also serves as a resource for the finalists, providing additional information as they further consider the opportunity and giving feedback on their personal and professional credentials, résumé, interview skills, and experience gaps. During this communication, it is important for the applicant to keep the recruiter updated about any changes in his or her current job and interest in the new position.

Once a preferred candidate is selected through the interview process, typically the recruiter works with the employer and the candidate to negotiate an agreement and compensation package. The recruiter usually assumes an intermediary role, providing information about salary and benefits practices in other communities, and serving as a conduit for the exchange of information to reach consensus. Once a final agreement is approved by both the city council and the manager, the recruiter can also assist in coordinating the announcement regarding the new employee who has been hired.

Typically, the search firm stays in touch after the new hire comes on board to help smooth the transition and ensure that the employer is satisfied with the hire. Most search firms guarantee their placements for a period of one or more years, and will conduct another recruitment if the person they placed leaves for any reason or is terminated for cause.

Finally, search firms protect the candidate’s confidentiality within the limits of local and state statutes and guidelines, and they subscribe to a policy of open recruitment and announcements. The search firm should advise the candidate of the confidentiality requirements that will be followed in each recruitment.

## How to work with a headhunter

For years, many job candidates regarded executive recruiters as intimidating and unapproachable. The demographics of the executive search industry are

changing, however, and recruiters now understand that every client could be a future candidate and every candidate could be a future client.

Today’s recruiters are receptive to applicants who contact them about particular openings. Recruiters view such contacts as opportunities to establish an ongoing relationship, and they encourage candidates to phone or e-mail them to keep them updated on their current positions and future plans. While recruiters typically have heavy travel schedules and commitments, many are happy to talk with individuals about specific positions or to simply provide career feedback and counsel.

If you do contact a recruiter, respect the recruiter’s time and your own. You’ll create a good first impression by being organized; describing yourself and your career objectives in a clear, concise, and objective fashion; and dealing straightforwardly. How you handle this contact determines your chances of becoming a prospect, and perhaps later a candidate, to that recruiter.

Whether or not you take the initiative, at some point in your career you’re likely to receive a call or letter from a recruiter regarding your interest in a specific position. If this occurs, you can be sure that the recruiter is doing one or more of the following: (1) sounding you out as a possible candidate if he or she believes you match the profile for this position and (2) determining whether you might be a source of other potential candidates for this position. Although you may not be interested in the position, this is a good opportunity to establish a relationship with the recruiter by referring potential candidates and letting the recruiter know your own career objectives and preferences. You are encouraged to discuss goals, objectives, and special projects that you’ve been working on; desirable geographic locations where you’d like to move; and/or your commute and family limitations. In brief, don’t squander the opportunity to leave a positive impression with the headhunter. Professional recruiters can be helpful to applicants through the recruitment process by providing updates on their status, coordinating travel arrangements, and giving constructive feedback following the interview process. If you do choose to apply for the position, do your homework as described earlier. Start with the position profile, which is an outline of what the employer is looking for. Recruiters use a variety of instruments and processes to get to the best fit for their clients, and you should be prepared to do your part by completing a questionnaire, for example, or responding to calls

and e-mails. You don't need to appear desperate, but you should be respectful and professional. Keep in mind that your behavior will affect how the recruiter presents you to the client.

If you accept an invitation as a finalist for an interview with the employer, the recruiter will expect your commitment to continue. But if you've learned something that has made you decide to bow out, do it before scheduling the interview and explain your reason to the recruiter. Candidates who withdraw from a recruitment process at a later date are seldom actively pursued again by the recruiter.

If you participate in a finalist interview but are not selected, ask the recruiter for feedback. Although it may be difficult for the recruiter to explain an employer's selection—it may have come down to "fit"—accept any feedback you get and learn from it. And remember that if you're not a good fit for the position, you wouldn't have been happy in it.

Although few executive search firms would admit to having a "blacklist," they're not very forgiving when a job seeker takes advantage of them. Recruiters work hard to build a trusting relationship with their clients, and that relationship is jeopardized when a job seeker lets them down. Two of the most common embarrassments for recruiters occur when (1) the selected candidate declines an offer because he or she was not serious about the job in the first place or the family refuses to relocate and (2) the selected candidate receives an offer and then uses it to extract a counteroffer from the current employer. Needless to say, taking advantage of a local government or a recruiter—or anyone else involved in the search process—is not a wise career move. On the other hand, establishing a good relationship can be an investment that pays off with little cost except an occasional phone call or e-mail.

# The selection process

The selection process begins when an employer or an executive recruiter screens résumés and cover letters and identifies likely candidates for the position. Making an impression in this phase of the process is important.

## Screening tools

The selection process is further refined by the use of various screening tools, such as a supplemental questionnaire, a series of interviews, and often a background investigation. During this process, the candidate will need to prepare for and participate in a number of sessions—and will also need to maintain a positive relationship with his or her current employer.

## Early reference calls

The employer may want to contact a few references to validate the information you have provided and get a “picture” of your personality and style. As an applicant, you will need to be prepared with a short list of references you can trust to keep your job search confidential at this point in the process. Again, be aware that reference information may be considered public record in some places. The employer will understand that this list is limited because of the timing.

## Screening interviews

The employer may arrange for screening interviews before selecting candidates for full on-site interviews. These screening interviews have traditionally been conducted by telephone, but as technology allows, potential employers and recruiting firms may use Skype, FaceTime, or video services such as Ziggeo to narrow the field of applicants. Some search firms may even choose to meet candidates personally for a “get acquainted” meeting. But whatever the nature of the screening interview that is scheduled, prepare for it as thoroughly as you would for a full interview.

If the screening interview will be by phone, you need to be in a comfortable environment with no interruptions or distractions. Plan an hour or so for the interview, and keep a clock close by. Telephone interviews require that you work at establishing a sense of connectedness. If the interviewer doesn't offer the

information, ask how much time is allotted and how many questions will be asked.

If the screening interview is electronic and includes video (via Skype or some other service), follow normal advice on preparing for the phone interview, but make sure that you connect with the employer as you would for an in-person interview. Your dress, facial expressions, demeanor, and energy will be visible to the employer, so you may want to practice in front of your computer or device and have someone evaluate your approach.

### TIP

It helps to test the technology to ensure that you have the right connection and your equipment works. Do not wait until the day of the interview to test or practice. Remember that your interviewer can see you, so be mindful of your hand gestures and of any distractions that may be in the room around you.

While it's difficult to judge how the interviewer is receiving your message via phone or electronic means, you may occasionally ask if you've answered the questions satisfactorily or if you need to provide more detail. Avoid very lengthy responses; provide a clear and concise answer followed by a brief example. If you find that your responses are longer than five minutes each, tighten them up. As always, be professional and respectful throughout the interview.

If the screening interview will be face-to-face, the location may be an office, a hotel lobby or meeting room, a coffee shop, or a restaurant. Allow sufficient time before the interview for unexpected delays, navigation, and parking. Always be prompt, courteous, and aware of unexpected issues that may arise, and take precautions to alleviate any circumstances before they become an issue. Always bring the most current copy of your résumé and cover letter to the interview. Interview preparation and skills are addressed in a later section.

## Written questions

As another screening device, the employer or recruiter may forward a set of written questions and ask you to respond in a limited time frame. While this may appear to be an evaluation of writing skills, it is far more. The questions are normally designed to evaluate your substantive knowledge and experience in a specific area of concern to the employer. Your earlier homework will enable you to provide relevant responses that relate your knowledge and experience to local concerns. Again, be concise in your responses and check carefully for spelling, punctuation, and grammar.

## Personality/Behavioral profile questionnaire

Some employers may ask you to complete a personality or behavioral profile questionnaire. Before agreeing to complete such a questionnaire, be sure you understand how the information will be used and who will receive a copy of it. Human personalities and behaviors are complex, and many of these questionnaires provide a simple description of traits based on a limited number of questions. In addition, no matter what degree of confidentiality is guaranteed, if the results are distributed to a number of people, the risk of public release increases. But if you decline to complete the profile, you may be eliminated from further consideration.

### TIP

It may be beneficial to take one or more types of personality or behavioral assessments to better understand yourself, your style, and your traits. This will provide you with a better idea of your strengths and potential weaknesses in relationship to a position, community, or opportunity. It will also prepare you for questions that may develop during the interview process about your particular style.

## Video

Some employers request a video instead of electronic or video conferencing. They may ask for a recording of you at a public meeting, a recording in which you

respond to one or more specific questions, or a recording in which you generally describe yourself.

If you're asked for a recording, the quality of the recording is extremely important. If the video shows you responding to specific questions or describing yourself, you should prepare and rehearse. Then you'll need to decide whether to use a home video camera or a professional studio to record the tape as there may be significant differences in quality and in how you appear. If the employer requests a tape of you at a public meeting, and if you do not have one available or if the only ones are of poor quality, you will need to "negotiate" a substitute response.

### TIP

Once you submit your résumé, you need to be prepared for surprise and short-notice requests during the screening process. Thus, it is best to conduct most of your research before you apply; then continue it until you are either hired or no longer under consideration. Always assume that you will be successful at each step and prepare for the next one.

## Community and employer relations

As the selection process proceeds, it's critical to maintain a positive professional relationship with both the current and future employers and the current and future communities. The *ICMA Code of Ethics* requires members to be committed to the highest ideals of honor and integrity in order to merit the respect and confidence of the elected officials, of other officials and employees, and of the public.

As you've learned by now, applicants for positions in the public sector should not have any expectation of confidentiality and privacy. If you've made a clear decision that it's time for you to seek a new position, then it's appropriate to inform your employer—either the chief elected official and governing body or an individual supervisor—of your intent to pursue other opportunities. Moreover, you should do so as soon as possible if you can expect that your employer will be professional about the news and not allow it to adversely affect his or her relationship with you or your ability to do your job.

Throughout the process, it's critical to maintain the trust and confidence of your current employer, and this relationship will be damaged if your employer learns of your plans from secondary sources or through the media. At a minimum you must ensure that your employer is informed before any public release is made of your consideration by a new employer and, at the latest, when you're invited to be interviewed. Even though the interviews may be confidential, the risk that the information will become public increases significantly at that point. If you're in a manager position, you should first call the mayor or chair of the presiding body and personally inform him or her. You should also be willing to tell all the members of the governing body what you are doing and why. Thus, as you begin the process, you should be prepared with a succinct and straightforward answer to the question, "Why are you pursuing other positions?"

## TIP

Be prepared to talk with the media once it becomes public knowledge that you have interviewed or are a candidate for a position. They will be asking many of the same questions that your current employer may be asking, and some may try to paint your current situation as controversial. Your message should be the same to the council, public, and media.

## The interview process: before, during, and after

The interview is critical. While good credentials and a great résumé get you the interview, the interview gets you the job! If you're going to stand out from the crowd as the most qualified candidate, you'll need to prepare thoroughly. After all, you'll now be face-to-face in competition with other professionals whose experience and track records are at least as good as yours. Don't be overconfident. Strong credentials rarely overcome a poor interview.

In a standard interview, you'll be questioned on work experience, accomplishments, career objectives, alternative approaches to problems faced by local government, and related matters. The interview may be limited to an hour, in which case finalists may be called back for a second interview.

## Types of interviews

For executive positions (manager or administrator), various processes may be used. You may start, for example, with a community panel including some council members and staffers, or you may interview directly with the governing body.

For staff positions (assistant, department head, analyst), your interview is likely to be with a group of managers and employees. Interview panels may include members of the executive management team as well as representatives of the business or residential community, a neighboring local government administrator, a local school district administrator, and others. Besides the full group, you may also spend some time individually with each member of the interview panel. In addition, you may be offered a tour with a staff member, and, if you're a candidate for a senior position, you may be invited to a staff or community reception.

Some employers may use tools other than a standard interview process, such as a written assignment, a verbal presentation, or an assessment center. An assessment center involves a variety of "exercises" in group or individual settings, including a verbal résumé, role play, and team problem solving. Assessors observe candidate behaviors and assess candidates' skills in oral communication, interpersonal interactions, problem solving/decision making, planning/organizing, and leadership.

## Preparing for the interview

To prepare yourself for an interview, you should do the following:

- Review available information regarding the local government.
- Make personal contacts with individuals who may have valuable information about the position and community.
- Assess your personal abilities, skills, and professional accomplishments.
- Assess your image and appearance.
- Prepare answers to potential interview questions.
- Plan your schedule so that you will be rested and engaged at the interview.

**Gathering information** If you haven't already done so, get as much information as practical on the community or jurisdiction, the organization, and the current and future issues and challenges. Research key

individuals in the organization, their backgrounds, and their stance on issues. You may obtain this information from the government’s website and agendas/minutes, the Internet, the community access channel, and newspapers.

**Personal contacts** Consider contacting individuals who are current or former employees of the organization. This may include the incumbent and key staff members. You may also consider contacting local business leaders, the school superintendent, the chamber of commerce, and managers and ICMA members in neighboring jurisdictions. In addition, the state association and ICMA Range Riders and Senior Advisors can be excellent sources of information.

**Assess your personal assets** To prepare for the interview, thoroughly review your résumé and career goals. Assess your technical competencies and skills, what you do well (and poorly), and where you’ve succeeded and failed. Be prepared to draw parallels between your background and past experiences and that of the employer. Consider your weaknesses as well as your strengths.

## TIP

Prepare answers to possible questions that have arisen through your research. If they are focused on infrastructure, economic development, human resources, etc., know how your experiences may help the interviewing community solve an issue that it may have.

**Image and appearance** It’s well known that clothes can affect how others perceive you. Studies have shown that people form an opinion of you in the first 40 seconds, long before you can tell your interviewer how you saved a city from certain bankruptcy. Your message will be muddled if you don’t look as solid,

## TIP

It is better to be overdressed than underdressed. Taking off a jacket is easy, but sitting across from five well-dressed individuals while you are wearing jeans can’t be undone.

secure, and “in charge” as your background implies. You need to look authoritative, confident, and able to get the job done. It may be necessary to take a critical look at your appearance and invest whatever it takes to improve it.

Your appearance should reflect taste, sound judgment, and attention to details—attributes that any interviewer should find reassuring. Be careful not to underdress or overdress, which can be more challenging as society is becoming more casual in dress. Underdressing can signal to others that you lack sophistication, that you don’t care about your personal appearance, or that you don’t consider the interview very important. Overdressing by wearing the latest trends or flashy colors can suggest that you value “style over substance,” that you are not in touch with local traditions and preferences, or even that you live beyond your means. Deciding on the middle ground is a judgment call based on many factors, such as the interviewers, the region, and the size of the local government. If possible, watch the cable access channel to see how the governing body and executives are dressed, especially during more formal proceedings. The ideal image is one that leaves the interviewers favorably impressed with your overall appearance without remembering why. Here are some guidelines to follow:

- A conservative appearance is the safest approach in an interview setting. Shades of navy, gray, burgundy, and black are good choices. A suit, sport coat or jacket, and slacks, or a dress are appropriate attire. Ensure that your clothing fits well and is clean and free from excessive wear.
- Details and accessories are important, too. If you plan to carry a briefcase to an interview, consider investing in a good leather one in burgundy, tan, brown, or black. Assess your shoes for wear and scuffing. Pay extra attention to personal grooming. Consider a haircut or style update, makeup, or manicure (gender appropriate). Keep jewelry, perfume, or cologne to a minimum.
- Remember, it is better to be overdressed than underdressed. Wearing a suit or jacket that can be removed is much more appropriate than wearing jeans/khaki’s and a polo and sitting across from individuals wearing suits and dresses.
- Your preliminary research should have told you how the employer is likely to react to tattoos, piercings, and other styles that are not considered “mainstream” in much of the United States. You will need to use your judgment about how to present yourself if any of these are part of your



personal “style,” but be prepared for some interviewers to react with their own bias.

- In a world where discussions of health insurance have become more commonplace and employers are making requests for background checks and physicals, it is important for you to remember to take care of yourself during the job-hunting process. As with your dress, your haircut, and your accessories, your physical shape will be considered as part of the package.

**Prepare your responses** It’s more difficult than you might think to respond succinctly to such questions as “How would you summarize your professional and personal background?” and “What are your career goals?” Thinking through your responses to potential questions can help you answer them concisely and articulately during an interview. Traditional questions that you should be prepared to answer include the following:

- What have been your most important accomplishments?
- What has been your worst failure?
- How do you relate to and communicate with the public?
- What are your management strengths and weaknesses?
- Why do you want to change jobs?
- What value do you bring to this organization?

However, more and more interviews are including value-based and situational or experienced-based questions that require you to answer with specifics in your experience that relate to the question. For example, instead of the traditional question “What are your management strengths and weaknesses?” an interviewer might ask:

Give us an example in your current position that demonstrates your management style.

- Please describe a time when something within your organization failed as a result of your management, and tell us what you learned from that experience.

Most of the questions will cover your past experience and how you would deal with specific problems that the employer is facing. For senior positions, the interview may focus more on your management philosophy and style than on your technical skills, so be prepared to provide examples that illustrate your philosophy. A list of popular interview questions appears in Appendix D. Set aside focused time to review these

## TIP

When faced with situational or experience-based questions, many candidates will attempt to answer in a theoretical way. For example, when asked for an example about management style, a candidate may say, “I am a participatory manager who serves the governing body well and pays real attention to details.” But the question was not “tell us about your management strengths”; it was “give us an example that demonstrates your style.” Make sure you are listening to the questions before answering. Some employers will simply move on and rate you on your reply, but others will redirect you and require you to provide an example.

questions and provide honest and succinct, yet thorough, responses. Providing a response that includes specific examples from your direct experience is an excellent way to exhibit your knowledge and abilities. Remember, this is your opportunity to “sell” yourself. If you personally led a project to completion, use the word “I.” If you were part of a team project, explain this and use the word “we.” Then explain your personal role in the project.

Most important, keep in mind that the interviewers will appreciate an upbeat and positive attitude. Speaking negatively about your current or former employer or colleagues is inappropriate. If you have had a bad experience, practice how you will address this in your interview.

## TIP

With the growth of the Internet and social media, both employers and job hunters search for ways to improve the process. Employers search for the best, or the “magic,” questions, and job hunters search for interview techniques to answer those questions. Some of the questions used by the top tech firms to probe a candidate’s thinking skills are “Why are manhole covers round?” or “How many dogs/gas stations/windows are in America today?” A review of some of these more popular questions may help you prepare in case they arise during your interview.

## The “magic” question

At the 2007 ICMA Annual Conference, [Daniel Pink](#), best-selling author and keynote speaker, mentioned such a question during the breakout session. He told a story of a Fortune 500 company that had developed what it considered to be the “magic” question for candidates. It was a simple question of just three words: *Are you lucky?*

At first glance, this seems like a silly or worthless question. Who cares if someone is lucky, right? But this company swore by the results, and this single question helped determine success or failure in the company. As Dan described it, there are really only two answers to the question:

1. No, I make my own luck. Everything I have is the result of my hard work, dedication, and effort.
2. Sure, I suppose luck plays into things. I grew up in a pretty good place, went to school, had some opportunities that found their way to me, it took a lot of hard work, but yes I would consider myself lucky.

Which person would you rather have in your organization? Which person would be a better team leader? The company determined that answer #2 resulted in a much better collaborative environment, whereas those who answered #1 were not bad people but were so reliant on their own efforts and accomplishments that they didn’t work well with others. Confidence is one thing, but be careful about coming across as egotistical, especially with “making your own luck.” At the 2012 conference, best-selling author and keynote speaker [Jim Collins](#) challenged the crowd during his break-out session to be prepared to answer, “*What is your return on luck?*”

## Google yourself

Just as the world of technology has changed the way that you research, prepare for, and handle an interview, it has also given council, staff, and community members an opportunity to get to know you before you arrive for the interview. Social network sites are just part of the public persona that public managers will have living “online.” An old news story, a personnel story, a comment made by a current resident or reporter—all will be online, and while you may or may not have been correctly quoted, you most certainly will be asked about the situation. Knowing what people may ask about “you” is just another way to make sure that you are prepared for the interview.

## Visit the community

If you have not been able to visit the community before your interview, plan to arrive a day in advance to tour the community, listen to the people you encounter, and consider how you will fit there. You can learn a great deal by driving through the residential and business districts, looking at the schools, and perusing a recent real estate listing magazine. Information on the value of homes, condition of public facilities, availability of shopping, and location of parks and

schools will help you determine if you want to live in the community. You may also consider unofficially visiting the employer’s facilities. If this is not practical, at least drive by the buildings. Most important, if you have a family, this is the appropriate time to involve your spouse/significant other in the process to ensure that this is an acceptable move for all of you.

**Staff tour** When you’re in town for an interview, a tour with staff may be scheduled either in a group or individually. You should regard the tour as a must-attend event and a critical part of the selection process. The tour provides an opportunity for you to gather information, but be aware that the individual(s) giving the tour most likely will be providing feedback on you as well.

### TIP

Asking to see the worst part of community along with the best part will give you a chance to view and hear what people believe their problems are. Adding this to the information that you’ve researched can help you get an idea of the community’s struggles as well as of its successes.

**Staff or community reception** Especially in the case of senior positions, a reception may be scheduled with staff, the council or board, or the community. Your spouse/significant other may or may not be included. These receptions are critical parts of the selection process, not casual social events. You need to approach them the same way you do the formal interview. Find out who will be there, research the backgrounds of the attendees, and develop a mental picture of the “personal image” you wish to project. Key words are *approachable*, *interested*, and *professional*. These events provide you with an opportunity to show the attendees that they would enjoy working with you, that you can do the job, and that you are interested in the community.

## TIP

The reception will provide your hosts with an open opportunity to see how you will deal with the staff/general public. They will be asking questions about your management style, what you see in the community, and your goals. Their agenda is to find out what you are like, professionally and socially.

Also be aware that in a general public session, some people may have alternative agendas. They may not tell you that they are running for council in the next election; they may not be completely honest about their backgrounds. You need to be honest with everybody, but steering the conversation to the positives of what you have seen or what you think is key; with luck, nobody is trying to find that quote or nefarious story about you to use later.

Lastly, some of the people who meet you will have done their research about you. Knowing what they have found is key and will keep you poised and professional. Know your background.

## The interview

The big day: the actual interview. There’s been a lot of preparation to get you to this point, and you should be pleased that you’ve made it to this stage. However, there are still some key preparations to make to ensure that you do your best.

**Your demeanor** confident, professional, personable demeanor is essential to a successful

interview. You should consider the following points for the interview itself:

- Be on time!
- Appear confident and energetic (but controlled); you’re not going to get the job if you appear to be uncertain or passive—or desperate.
- Project an image of maturity and intelligence.
- Demonstrate good body control and posture, eye contact, and a firm handshake. Practice your handshake with others ahead of time and ask for an honest assessment.
- Respond to questions directly, concisely, and articulately; answer the questions you are asked, providing examples from past experience where appropriate.
- Emphasize your successes, as the single best indicator of future performance is past success. But don’t brag, and don’t appear overconfident.
- Avoid small talk and trivia.
- Don’t try to be too humorous, but don’t give the impression that you have no sense of humor, either.
- Avoid offensive language and off-color jokes; even if they win you a laugh, they’ll probably lose you the job.
- Be cautious about expressing personal opinions on issues that might be sensitive to others.
- Avoid criticizing your current employer or others; such behavior reflects a lack of loyalty and judgment on your part.
- Don’t be uncomfortable with pauses; let the interviewers take the lead.
- Be sure to give credit where credit is due. Few managers have been successful single-handedly.
- Avoid smoking even if your interviewers do, and avoid alcoholic beverages (keep this in mind during the community reception).
- Don’t bluff or cover up.

You’re being interviewed because your performance record indicates that you have the skills and talents the employer needs, and you should be projecting this during the interview. Remember that each situation is unique, and the importance of conveying who you are as a person as well as who you would be in the job cannot be overemphasized.

**Your message** During the interview, your goal is to convince the interviewers that you can do the job. Whether you’re a recent graduate or a more

experienced candidate, you want to convey a message that you

- know the responsibilities of the job, are technically competent, and can do the job
- are open, honest, and self-confident
- are a self-starter and a problem solver
- can work effectively with others
- will be loyal and responsive to your employer
- will be successful if hired
- will bring value to the organization
- are interested in the community and the profession.

For senior manager/administrator positions, you also want to show that you have the ability to

- provide administrative leadership
- work effectively with the council, board, and staff
- communicate and work effectively with citizens and advisory groups
- understand and solve problems.

Finally, be yourself. Trying to anticipate what the interviewer wants and portraying yourself as something or someone who you are not can only backfire. Even if no one on the interview team senses the inconsistency now (and someone usually will), you'll eventually revert to your true self. Both you and your employer will be unhappy when they discover that they didn't get what they expected.

**What questions should I ask and when?** Often the initial interview does not allow much time, if any, for questions that you may have, and you'll need to save your questions for possible follow-up sessions. Asking questions shows that you're interested; it gives you an opportunity to demonstrate what you know about the job and the community; and it puts the follow-up interview on a more equal footing. You should prepare a list of questions on the basis of your preinterview research. Concentrate on the major concerns that will affect your decision to either accept or reject the job; asking too many questions may have an adverse effect on the employer's impressions of you.

*Do not use this opportunity to ask how you did in the interview!* Finally, don't ask about compensation until a mutual interest has been established. Long before the interview you should have determined (either with the recruiter or through your own research) that you're at least in the right "ballpark" as far as salary is concerned.

**How do I conclude an interview?** At the conclusion of the interview, thank the interviewers for considering you and, if you want the job, let your interviewers know that you want the job and that you're prepared to do what it takes to be successful. You may also wish the employer the very best in the event that you're not selected. Follow-up notes to interviewers are acceptable and appreciated as long as they are sent immediately.

## Withdrawing from a selection process

As you proceed through a selection process, you may decide to withdraw for many different reasons. If you decide to withdraw after you have submitted application material, but before you have been invited to an interview, you may do so with a formal written communication. If you have had personal contact with an executive recruiter or an official of the other government, it is also polite to call and let that person know you are withdrawing.

If you decide to withdraw from the selection process after your candidacy has become public, you need to do so in a way that extends professional courtesy to the potential employer and maintains the confidence of your current employer. You should personally contact the mayor or governing body chair and provide a direct explanation of why you have elected to withdraw. If you're working with an executive recruiter, it is appropriate to consult the recruiter about how to communicate the withdrawal. Simultaneously, you need to inform your current employer and staff in order to maintain these relationships. In all instances, you should be prepared with a direct answer to why you have withdrawn.

# The remainder of the process

After the selection process is complete, you'll be faced with one of two possible outcomes: You will either be offered the job—or not.

## If you're not offered the job

You thought you had a great interview, you did your research on the community, you looked at potential housing and schools, you were ready for a change and yet . . . you were not selected. What do you do now?

Not getting a job offer, particularly one that you really wanted, can be a major disappointment and, depending on your current employment status, can be much more than that. So how can you learn from the experience and prepare for the next round?

First, take time to thank the prospective employer for the opportunity to interview. It will demonstrate your professionalism.

Next, consider asking for constructive feedback from the interviewer or executive recruiter. Ask what you could have done differently during the interview process. What concerns did they have? Were they looking for more experience in economic development, planning, budgeting, or finance? Did they want an advanced degree? It may be awkward to ask, but the information will be helpful to you in your next interview.

Keep in mind that the interviewer may find it difficult or uncomfortable to provide you with feedback. Perhaps the decision was based on a “gut instinct” that is difficult to explain. You may probe for feedback to a certain extent, but you should also know when to let it go and accept it. Avoid challenging the interviewer, as this behavior won't produce any result other than reinforcing the decision not to hire you. Remember that the ultimate decision to hire an individual comes down to a question of fit. If it's not a good fit, you wouldn't have been happy there. Accept the decision and learn from the experience.

Then take a look at your résumé and cover letter and determine whether you could improve them. Also consider asking a professional headhunter or colleague to review your résumé, even if you did this before submitting your application. Consider your interview and how you might practice responding to particular questions. If you asked for and received constructive

criticism, develop a plan for addressing any areas of weakness.

You should also be prepared to address concerns on the part of your current employer. If you still plan to search for other employment, be prepared to answer questions about this plan appropriately. Assure those you work with that you will continue to provide excellent service to your current community. Emphasize your professionalism in this respect.

Evaluate your short- and long-term career goals and develop a plan to move forward with them in a constructive way. Finally, don't let one negative experience in job interviewing color your next experience. Do your research again, prepare, and enthusiastically approach the next opportunity. As novelist A. J. Cronin once said, “But always, if we have faith, a door will open for us, not perhaps the one that we ourselves would ever have thought of, but one that will ultimately prove good for us.”

## If you are offered the job

In the happy event that you're offered the job, you'll need to negotiate your total compensation package, plan a smooth transition from your current position, and prepare for the “first 100 days” in your new position. If you are actively pursuing other positions, you need to withdraw as a candidate once you have accepted an offer. Under the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#), members may interview for multiple positions and even consider more than one offer. But once a member has accepted a *bona fide* offer, even verbally, he or she is obligated to take the position. If you are the candidate for the manager's position, once you have negotiated and given your verbal acceptance, you are committed to it unless the governing body fails to approve or substantially changes the negotiated employment agreement.

In the event that you are interviewing for multiple positions and the first offer is not your first choice, think carefully before accepting. But be prepared to give an answer as soon as possible (see the negotiating topic for more detail). If you take a position that isn't your first choice, you need to be able to live with the decision for two years. That's the definition of a professional tenure under the Code of Ethics. And the

responsibility for conducting due diligence to make sure that the position is a good personal and professional fit rests with you. Inadequately evaluating whether you and your family will thrive in the community's educational, social, employment, and climate conditions; assessing whether you are capable of meeting the organization's challenges; or determining the political culture of the community is not justification for leaving a position early.

If you're offered the job after the first interview, you may consider asking for a follow-up interview. During the initial interview, the employer asked most of the questions and determined who the organization wanted. Now it's your turn. The follow-up interview is your opportunity to make a final determination of whether the position and the community meet your professional and personal needs and is it a good fit for you and your family.

If you're applying for a manager position, every member of the council or board should be at the follow-up interview. This interview is where you're going to get a group consensus on many of the important matters that will affect you. It also allows you to deal on a firsthand basis with any objections or concerns that might surface.

Questions that you will want to consider when attending a follow-up interview for any position include the following:

- Are your responsibilities defined clearly, and are they outlined in the charter or another document?
- Do you feel that you're up to the challenge, or are you concerned that you would be in over your head?
- Are there any unresolved issues in the community from the prior administration that need immediate attention/action?
- Will you be given an opportunity to continue your professional development and to participate in training programs?

## Reference checks and background investigations

Reference checks and background investigations are part of almost all job openings today. The higher the level of responsibility or security, the deeper and more lengthy the investigation.

**Reference checks** Although the prospective employer may have made some inquiries earlier, by this point he or she will certainly check your references and want to talk to your current employer

or supervisor—whether that's a council or board or a single supervisor—as well as to specific coworkers, subordinates, or community members. Alert your references at the appropriate time and ensure that they understand the position for which you are applying and why you are interested in a career change.

If you believe that some of these required references will be negative, you should alert the prospective employer and explain why. If you do not wish a specific individual to be contacted, you should request this and explain why. The information obtained when contacting references is generally confidential and will not be shared with you, but that is not true for all states or localities.

**Background investigations** There's a fine line between an extensive reference check and a full background investigation. In addition to the information gathered from reference checks, the background investigation will normally include credit, education, employment, and criminal record verification and a review of social media sites. Remember that all your social media accounts, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, comments on blogs, etc., are available to everyone. When using these websites you should not share any information that you are not comfortable sharing with the general public. Too many people have an expectation of privacy where none exists.

The extent to which background investigations are conducted varies significantly. However, you should anticipate that one will be conducted before you are offered the position. Typically, you will be asked to sign a release permitting the investigation. You may also be asked to provide your potential employer with access to your social media sites.

Professional websites such as LinkedIn enable you to list your education, qualifications, and experience. Check to ensure that the data posted on these sites match what you submitted on your résumé.

Finally, the prospective employer may send a professional investigator to visit your community and verify information through personal contacts and interviews with selected employers or citizens. In the event of a full background investigation that involves a community visit, you should be notified in advance, and you should ask for the name and qualifications of the individual conducting the site visit. Normally, these visits cannot be kept confidential, and you need to be prepared accordingly.

If the investigation reveals any discrepancies with the information you have provided, you should have an opportunity and be prepared to address them.

## Media relations

If you're applying for a position as chief executive or CAO of a community, you can expect media interest. At some point in the selection process, the names of the candidates will be publicly released, and the media may contact you directly with questions. They may also ask other individuals and/or your current employer for information about you, and they may cover some of the interviews if those interviews are conducted in public.

If you're contacted by a media representative, you should verify what information is public. If a reporter tells you he or she understands that you're an applicant for a certain position and you have not yet been informed that the names are public, you should first contact the representative of the future employer to verify that the names are indeed public. If you are working through an executive search firm, it will likely notify you that the names of candidates have been made public.

Once you're informed that candidates' names will be made public, you may wish to talk briefly with the employer or the recruitment firm about how you should interact with the media and what comments you should share. However, in all your dealings with the media, you should take a professional approach and ensure that the information is accurate and truthful. You will need to provide straightforward answers to questions while at the same time ensuring that you are treating both your potential and your current employers with professional courtesy and respect. Also, you should recognize that the potential employer may consider in its hiring decision any information that appears in the public media.

Some media outlets allow public comments (blogs) to their articles, and your candidacy may attract comments. It may be a good idea to review those online comments and posts, but it is not recommended that you respond or reply to them.

During the interview process, the governing body or members of the media may ask you to comment on what improvements you would make in the organization or community if offered the position. It's a perfectly reasonable question that requires a thoughtful, forthright response. Your response should focus on the talents and skills you bring to the table without being critical of others. The guideline on Professional Respect in Tenet 3 of the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#) reminds members seeking a management position to "show professional respect for persons formerly holding the position or for others who might be applying for the same position. Professional respect does not preclude honest differences of opinion; it does preclude attack-

ing a person's motives or integrity in order to be appointed to a position." As one seasoned city manager has advised, "Don't jump the gun or dance on the grave of your predecessors."

## Negotiating compensation

The relationship between a preferred candidate and an employer—whether that's a council or other governing body or an individual supervisor—begins with the negotiation of a salary, fringe benefits, and other conditions of employment. At the outset, it's important to remember that compensation should be viewed as a total package, not as salary alone.

The goal in negotiations should be to find common ground where both parties believe the level of compensation is fair and equitable. The key often lies in the early stages of the recruitment process, when a range was developed and communicated to candidates.

The factors that most often influence the governing body's compensation offer are

- the salary of the incumbent or previous manager
- the salary of managers in similarly sized communities and neighboring communities
- the salary of highest-paid staff member
- the current salary of the applicant (although this may not be fair given that salaries may vary greatly according to housing costs and other factors)
- a desire to offer at the lower end of the salary range with the opportunity for growth with proven performance.

The factors that most often influence a candidate's salary demand are

- the expectation of a compensation increase of 10 to 20 percent over his or her current position
- the opportunity for professional growth and challenge
- the local costs of living and housing
- employment opportunities for a spouse or partner at his or her current compensation level
- the perceived stability or volatility of the position
- the stability of the government and ability to negotiate a fair severance package
- a desire to lock in compensation at the higher end of the salary range, as raises may be limited in the future.

You should tell your prospective employer what you expect in terms of salary, benefits, and a contractual arrangement. If an executive recruiter is involved,

he or she will have already provided this information. If there is no recruiter, be sure that you provide everyone at the follow-up interview with a list of your current fringe benefits and salary history.

Compensation negotiations can be tense and in some states may occur in public. Governing body members negotiating with a preferred candidate for manager may view themselves in a position of power and have the attitude that if the candidate truly wants the position, he or she will take what they offer. At the same time, the candidate will try to improve his or her financial situation and may take the view that if the prospective employer is really serious about the job offer, it'll pay what the candidate requests. This is the point at which the candidate has the most leverage he or she will ever have regarding the level of compensation.

Even more than the follow-up interview, the negotiating session is your opportunity to pursue in detail your personal and professional goals. As you negotiate the elements of a particular compensation package, think forward to your long-range plans and to the conditions that you will need to lead a satisfying life. If you're a candidate for an executive position, you know that you'll face a wide range of stresses and pressures on the job. If you add financial problems to these pressures, you do nothing but diminish your ability to perform at peak efficiency. Negotiating for a good compensation package makes sense.

A good compensation package, with a severance provision, will make you stronger, more stable, and more independent in your job. When you're not afraid of the financial consequences of losing your job, you can devote more attention to your duties and responsibilities. The severance package environment has changed in many states; be prepared and know whether there are any state limitations on severance packages.

ICMA has a [Model Employment Agreement](#) for managers, accompanied by tips for negotiating in the Job Center. Some states have developed model agreements based on the ICMA agreement but tailored to the state; check with your state association. In addition, please see the section, "Compensation Guidelines" in the [ICMA Recruitment Guidelines Handbook](#).

Don't hesitate to consider a job offer or a salary proposal for a day or so. Tell the prospective employer that you're pleased to have been offered the job and you'd like to take some time to consider the offer. Be professional and respectful of his or her time, however, and be diligent in your evaluation of the offer. Provide a response as promptly as possible.

## How does negotiating get under way?

Be sure that you understand who has been given negotiation authority from your prospective employer. A recruiter, if involved, may sometimes serve in that role, as may the mayor or president of the council/commission or sometimes the city/county attorney. It is also important to note that in some states, the negotiations process may be an open, public process.

An effective and desirable way to initiate negotiation discussions is for you to provide a written, easily understandable copy of your current salary and benefits. It's critical to focus everyone's attention on your current compensation package and what you expect to receive in the new position. As you present your conditions for employment, be complete and comprehensive. Employers can become very uncomfortable with the candidate who presents conditions one or two at a time and always has "one more item" to discuss. Get it all on the table, conceptually at least; then deal with the specifics. A good way to handle this is by preparing a worksheet with four columns: (1) a list of benefits, (2) your existing benefit package, (3) what you expect to receive from your new employer, and (4) the terms that all parties agree on (see Appendix E).

Generally, there may be a feeling of awkwardness about "getting down to terms." For that reason, the candidate must be prepared to take the initiative in introducing and guiding the negotiation discussion. In the case of a manager negotiating with a governing body, you should not assume that the elected officials understand the accepted employment practices in hiring a local government professional. Nor should you conclude that they have collectively discussed the employment conditions specifically acceptable to them as a group. Quite often, this may be the first such selection this group has faced. Don't hesitate to lead, but don't come across as overbearing or condescending, either. Tact and diplomacy are called for at this point. Simply getting the negotiation session under control and organized will help. Finally, it's imperative that you be a good "explainer" as well as a good listener throughout the negotiations. What may appear to be resistance to a particular benefit may stem from misunderstanding, not from a refusal to negotiate.

Third-party involvement at this point can be helpful—whether you use an executive recruiter, a copy of the [ICMA Model Employment Agreement](#), or other sample agreements or letters of understanding. In addition, the National Association of Counties (NACo),



the National Association of County Administrators (NACA), and state leagues of cities and counties are good sources of information on the salaries and compensation packages of local government professionals around the country. In every *Municipal Year Book* up through 2014, ICMA has made available median and mean salaries in cities and counties by population group for each state. Salary data and benefit data are now available in the [CEO Salary Survey summary](#). By using these sources, you can acquaint the appointing authority with the practices of other municipalities, provide discussion checklists, and emphasize the importance of committing to writing the final determination of the negotiation process—a business-like action that clarifies for all involved exactly what conditions were agreed on. A written agreement is especially helpful to future governing bodies and will preclude the need for you to explain or defend previously granted employment conditions in the future.

If you're working with an executive recruiter, that person can facilitate the negotiation process by providing the employing governing body with information about employment and appointment practices and expectations. Having such information in advance helps the employer relate in a more informal and positive manner to the candidate's comments or requests regarding salary or benefits. Information presented by a recruiter need not be restricted to the areas of discussion, but it does provide helpful background.

## How aggressive should I be?

The manner in which you negotiate your employment conditions will create a lasting impression on the employer and may affect your future relations and the level of mutual confidence and trust that will prevail. The advice to “be yourself,” found in all phases of the recruitment and selection process, is especially true during negotiations. The “real you,” your style, your approach to problem solving, your articulation of the alternatives relating to sensitive governmental and financial issues, your flexibility and openness, and the overall manner in which you conduct yourself during negotiations will serve as the last and critical evaluation that the appointing authority uses to make its final decision.

Although reasonableness, honesty, and “give and take” should prevail during negotiation sessions, and the circumstances of both parties should be thoughtfully recognized, you should never be reluctant to present your qualities and abilities. Everything that is important to you should be on the table.

Whether you're a recent graduate or an experienced manager, you have a track record of achievements and definable, verifiable, predictable, and potential abilities to offer a local government—that's why you're the prime candidate. You should forthrightly present your worth, value, and commitment to the elected officials and community that you seek to serve. As you negotiate, bear in mind that, unlike the business sector executive, the local government executive does not have as strong an opportunity to bargain for a salary increase based on performance. In most cases, public sentiment and the political ceiling on salaries prohibit large salary increases.

## The do's and don'ts of negotiating

Here are some suggestions to help you through the negotiating process:

- Do be yourself.
- Do stand firm for the things that are important to you, your profession, and your family, and know what your general limits are when you begin negotiations.
- Do keep faith with your career plans.
- Do be forthright and specific about your ability to carry out expectations; show enthusiasm for the position.

## Keys to successful negotiations and contracts

- Seek to find common ground and a true understanding of the key issues and concerns for the candidate and the employer.
- Be flexible and creative in finding ways to structure a compensation package that both parties find acceptable.
- Maintain some flexibility but also avoid unrealistic expectations.
- Get the agreement in writing before any public announcement is made.
- If applicable, review the proposed total compensation package with your financial adviser.
- For a senior position, involve your personal attorney in the review of any employment agreement.

- Do negotiate for a total compensation package by getting all conditions on the table initially.
- Do recognize the employer’s ability and willingness to pay.
- Do attempt to get the best compensation you can at the start, but appreciate the views of employers who are generous but want to see some performance first.
- Do exhibit flexibility, reasonableness, and openness to compromise.
- Do request specific information relative to living costs or benefits that may be unique to the area (e.g., high state income tax, a “requirement” to live in a certain area, and club or social memberships and expectations).
- Do have a specific salary and benefits in mind; have a written handout listing current and desired employment conditions.
- Do ask to be evaluated regularly and to be compensated on the basis of performance.
- Do offer to draw up an employment agreement.
- Don’t promise anything that you can’t deliver; don’t oversell yourself.
- Don’t “play it tough”: you’re not dealing with the union.
- Don’t forget that your actions and demeanor reflect on you *and* the local government management profession.
- Don’t assume that the interviewers know your worth as well as do the folks “back home”; convey the unique aspects of your background and your expertise that justify your negotiating position.
- Don’t assume that the interviewers have an accurate knowledge of key staff salaries or benefits; attempt to secure or request such information for negotiation discussions.
- Don’t boast to anyone about your superior negotiating skills or about how you “outdid” the governing body.
- Don’t go overboard with details; not all factors can be reduced to writing.
- Don’t negotiate for the position unless you are really interested; “practice” sessions are unprofessional and taboo.

## How do I wrap up the negotiations?

The recruitment process has been a relatively long and arduous task for all involved. Following their

interviews of the candidates, most employers are disposed toward making a hiring decision as soon as possible. They presume that candidates are similarly disposed and are prepared for a prompt response to an offer. So be prepared to say “yes” or “no” as soon as possible.

Of course, you and the employer need time to commit your agreement to writing, but if you truly want the position, it’s best to secure it with an immediate good-faith handshake and the promise of a prompt meeting to sign the agreement and make mutual public announcements of your appointment.

Again, the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#) addresses the question of appointment commitment: “Members who accept an appointment to a position should not fail to report for that position. This does not preclude the possibility of a member considering several offers or seeking several positions at the same time, but once a bona fide offer of a position has been accepted, that commitment should be honored. Oral acceptance of an employment offer is considered binding unless the employer makes fundamental changes in terms of employment.”

Remember, too that Tenet 4 of the Code requires a member to commit to a position for a *minimum of two years* except under very unusual circumstances. This applies not only to managers but also to members who accept assistant, analyst, or other local government positions. So when you offer that handshake, you should stop pursuing any other positions you may have applied for, and you should know enough about the conditions of employment to make a two-year commitment.

At this point, the employer is generally exhilarated over the completion of a major task and especially “high” on the new appointee. Untimely delays, new conditions, or surprises will nearly always result in disappointment, and they can erode a relationship that has not yet even begun.

Negotiate in good faith, establish conditions fair to both parties, and do your homework so that you can say YES! to an appointment offer and begin the new job as soon as possible. That’s the ideal wrap-up of any negotiation.

## Final steps

In the final stages of the hiring process, an offer has been made, background checks have been completed, and negotiations are done. You’ve survived the media onslaught, the community interviews, and the governing board’s review, and you’re ready to call a moving company. There are just a few more details to manage.

## The written agreement

Written agreements vary in form. For staff positions and positions below the level of department head, a letter of agreement outlining the terms of employment and compensation often suffices. For senior positions, a more formal employment agreement is recommended. The career of a city or county manager is often volatile; in some cases his or her job security is at risk with each meeting of the governing body. Because of the at-will nature of the position and the turnover and change among elected officials, candidates for these senior positions generally are advised to seek some protection through an agreement with a severance provision that requires continuation of salary and benefits for a set period of time—usually from six to twelve months. The terms of the severance agreement are contingent on the person not being terminated for cause. Remember to ask the recruiter or check state statutes to determine whether there are any limitations set for public servants' severance packages. The ICMA [Model Employment Agreement](#) includes a severance provision of one year during which salary and many benefits would continue after termination.

## Relationships with your current employer

Once you've decided to accept an offer in another jurisdiction, you'll need to provide notice to your current employer and do whatever you can to ensure a smooth departure and transition. Meet with the mayor or board chair or your supervisor to communicate your decision, develop a notification hierarchy, and strategically assess the goals you should focus on during the transition. Give your employer sufficient notice—typically 30 to 60 days, or longer if you have a contractual obligation. If applicable, make certain the announcement is delivered to the governing body and staff before any public announcement is made. Discuss how to keep the public announcement positive.

## Develop a transition plan

Unless your relationship has deteriorated badly, your employer will almost certainly welcome your assistance in providing continuity of management for the community and the organization. Offer to help develop a process for recruiting your replacement; perhaps help them select a search firm and/

or create a job profile defining what they want in a candidate.

Prepare a written status report and transition plan for ongoing projects and issues and key staff contacts. This plan, which should be based on meetings with relevant staff, will help others in the organization keep things moving and provide a useful orientation for your successor.

You can see an example of a [formal transition plan](#) prepared by City Manager Roger Kemp on the ICMA website. Among the topics it covers are

- council/board leadership briefing topics
- major pending projects
- legislative priorities (local and state levels)
- customer service
- appointments (interim assignments to represent the municipality)
- state and federal grants
- capital improvement program
- revenue options
- economic development options
- budget expenditure forecasts (particularly for volatile areas)
- department performance objectives
- collaborative plans with other municipalities
- summary of municipal accomplishments during tenure.

Other suggestions:

- Try to avoid burning bridges. Take the high ground. If you're leaving, it may be because you're not happy with the current situation. Don't "get it off your chest" and say things that will cause controversy or ill feelings. Think about the time years from now when you're applying for another job and a local newspaper calls your former employer.
- If your current employment situation has eroded to the point that when you give notice, your employer can't wait to see you go, discuss an appropriate exit strategy. If you're a manager and the governing body wants you to move on, work out a time line that is acceptable to both parties, taking into account the termination and severance provisions of your agreement.
- Be prepared to be blamed. After you leave, anything and everything that goes wrong will inevitably be wholly or partly blamed on you. Be thick-skinned; responding will only aggravate the situation.

# Tips for a seamless transition

Everyone has his or her own style and may approach the first 100 days in a new job differently. Several examples are cited here. See the accompanying sidebar, which is an article [Tips for a Seamless Transition](#) by Katie Lichtig, city manager of San Luis Obispo, CA, describing what she did in her first 100 days to help ease the transition from one local government manager to the next.

1. **Have work-related transition plans.** This overall transition plan should include a plan for meeting with employees, labor leaders, and community groups like Rotary, Optimists, or other service organizations; a communications plan to introduce yourself and your management expectations to employees; and a plan for getting clear direction from elected officials on their performance objectives for you during the first year.

In my employment contract, it was spelled out that within the first 90 days the council and I were to develop performance objectives. This is extremely helpful for directing your time and attention.

2. **Create a personal transition plan also.** This plan should include things like where to live, where to buy locally whenever possible (the sales representative at the local store where I bought my new appliances is, for example, the mom of a city employee), which grocery stores are located near your home, which dry cleaners are good, where to go to the gym, and other options for necessities.

Ask councilmembers, department heads, and the outgoing city manager for their advice. The less time you spend figuring out what you need to know after you start, the easier your transition will be.

3. **Get comfortable being the center of attention for the first 100 days.** I met and shook hands with more people, attended more welcome parties, and gave more speeches than I ever imagined possible. To help tailor the message, I created a standard “show and tell” about me and then tweaked the message depending on the group I was addressing. At one of the presentations, I actually got a laugh—and perhaps endeared myself to a few in the audience—by admitting that I felt a little like a new baby panda at the zoo the way people were flocking to see me and hear me speak.

4. **Spend at least a few days in the community after your appointment but before you begin the new job.** There will be tons of curiosity—and some anxiety, too—about the “new manager.” This gives the new person an opportunity to start the process of getting to know the elected officials one on one (remember, these are your new bosses), the team of department heads, and the select members of a community. It also gives you a head start on tip number 2.

5. **Ask the departing manager and the department heads to prepare an orientation package for the incoming manager that can, for example, include these items:**

- Introductions and getting acquainted.
- Information about the organization: people, programs, and projects.
- Goals and objectives: departmental responsibilities.
- Key policy documents.
- Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats—in one page!

- Department field tour, including suggestions for the future.
- Suggestions about community leaders to meet, from a departmental perspective.

Do your best to review the binder at least a couple of times before your first day, but don't have high expectations that you'll retain it all. Plan to go back to review the binder after 30 days and again after 60 days. It will be a great resource once you have context about the who, what, where, when, and why of the organization.

6. **Ask the elected officials to take you on a tour of the community.** A guided tour is an incredible tool to get to know the councilmembers, their focus, and some interesting tidbits about the local government that you might not have learned otherwise. It also gives you the opportunity to learn your way around the community like an insider. In my case, my tour guide—the councilmember—was also the driver.

During your tour, be open to new ideas. One councilmember asked me if I was willing to take the tour on a bicycle (San Luis Obispo is a bike-friendly community), and I agreed. Another councilmember is a private pilot, and he has suggested that we take to the air for our tour. This trip is still pending!

7. **Prioritize meet-and-greet opportunities.** Many people will want to get to know you, and you will need to space out your get-togethers with both current and former elected officials, department heads, employees, members of the media, chamber of commerce officials, representatives from major employers, community members, union representatives, and others.

Pace yourself because the meeting and greeting will take months, not weeks. But definitely get out, including spending time with employees in their own work environments. So far, I have trimmed trees, welded, changed tires, spent St. Patrick's Day on patrol with the police department (which included a code 3 incident), toured our reservoirs and dams, and saw the inner workings of the water treatment plant and wastewater treatment plant.

I also perused the bus depot and rode the busiest route, finished concrete, and cut the grass in a park. I still am making the rounds, but it has been an invaluable investment in getting to know our dedicated employees and the issues that our community faces.

8. **Train yourself to recognize that it is a learning opportunity when you hear people say, “Well, when the former manager was here, he used to. . . .”** There will also be times when people contact the former manager to seek an opinion on a topic, but they do not contact the current manager. Remember that these are all data points and can be used to guide you in many directions—not just in the opposite direction—to prove that a new manager is in charge now.

In the end, there are lots of people who want you to be successful, including the elected officials, the department-head team, other city employees, caring members of the community, and—we hope—your predecessor. Take advantage of these tips and the advice and counsel of those who offer to assist—all of this taken together will lead to a smooth transition in your new community.

# Career checklist for the first 100 days on the job (and a few tips to consider before accepting).

Here are some tips on what you can do to make a successful transition to a new public sector job.

## ***Before you make your decision***

- Be sure to receive a written employment agreement or a letter of understanding before you accept the job.
- Have a clear idea of why you wanted to make the job change and of how this opportunity helps you meet your needs.
- Never accept a position unless your family has seen the new community.
- Use your network to obtain background information on your community.

## ***Take care of your community***

- Learn community basics as soon as possible (names of streets, neighborhoods, great places to meet people, and names of local government employees).
- Subscribe to the local newspaper before day one, and read old clippings for a sense of history.
- Accept all speaking invitations. (Use a phrase or technique that will make your topic memorable as well as significant.)
- List your home phone number in the phone book.
- Develop a way to evaluate how the citizens view your position and local government operations.
- Volunteer to serve on a civic board, the Cancer Society, the United Way, or other public service organization. Be careful, however, not to over-extend yourself.
- Observe projects and problems firsthand.

## ***Take care of your organization***

- Meet the employees in their workplaces.
- Spend time with your administrative assistant.
- Insist on annual performance evaluations both for yourself and for your department directors.

- Attend the meetings of citizen advisory boards and commissions.
- Thoroughly familiarize yourself with the annual budget document, annual audit, and city or county code.
- Take all phone calls. Screen them later.
- Let the administration before yours fire the employees they think need to be fired.
- Arrange the office the way you want it. Add personal touches.
- Avoid comparisons such as “The way I did it in my last position was....”
- List your cell phone number and e-mail address on your business card.
- Ask your governing body to provide you with a list of community activists and business leaders, and meet with each of them personally.
- Prepare for your governing board a summary of who you met with and a list of key issues you’ve learned from your community interviews.
- Attend a wide range of civic events.
- Initiate regular meetings with the media.

## ***Take care of yourself***

- Declare that your new address is “home.”
- Identify at least three specific, positive things about your new community that you are willing to share with anyone.
- Say yes to social invitations.
- Develop a clear set of expectations about what you wish to accomplish, and convey these expectations to everyone.
- Move the family only once and as soon as is possible and practical.
- Become accessible and involved.
- Reestablish your personal support networks as soon as possible.

*Offered by James Bacon Jr. when he was city manager of Decatur, Illinois.*

# APPENDIX A:

## Practices for effective local government management

As identified by ICMA University, at [icma.org/effectivemanagementpractices](http://icma.org/effectivemanagementpractices). ICMA University programs are designed to advance your career, enrich your community, and contribute to your professional fulfillment. All ICMA University programs are drawn from the 18 core competencies determined by members to be essential to local government management.

*Italicized additions* are clarifications inserted by task force members.

- 1. Staff effectiveness:** Promoting the development and performance of staff and employees throughout the organization (*requires knowledge of interpersonal relations; skill in motivation techniques; ability to identify others' strengths and weaknesses*). Practices that contribute to this core content area are:
  - ▶ **Coaching/mentoring:** Providing direction, support, and feedback to enable others to meet their full potential (requires knowledge of feedback techniques; ability to assess performance and identify others' developmental needs)
  - ▶ **Team leadership:** Facilitating teamwork (requires knowledge of team relations; ability to direct and coordinate group efforts; skill in leadership techniques)
  - ▶ **Empowerment:** Creating a work environment that encourages responsibility and decision making at all organizational levels (requires skill in sharing authority and removing barriers to creativity)
  - ▶ **Delegating:** Assigning responsibility to others (requires skill in defining expectations, providing direction and support, and evaluating results)
- 2. Policy facilitation:** Helping elected officials and other community actors identify, work toward, and achieve common goals and objectives (*requires knowledge of group dynamics and political behavior; skill in communication, facilitation, and consensus-building techniques; ability to engage others in identifying issues and outcomes*). Practices that contribute to this core content area are:
  - ▶ **Facilitative leadership:** Building cooperation and consensus among and within diverse groups, helping them identify common goals and act effectively to achieve them; recognizing interdependent relationships and multiple causes of community issues and anticipating the consequences of policy decisions (requires knowledge of community actors and their interrelationships)
- 3. Functional and operational expertise and planning:** Practices that contribute to this core content area are:
  - ▶ **Facilitating council effectiveness:** Helping elected officials develop a policy agenda that can be implemented effectively and that serves the best interests of the community (requires knowledge of role/authority relationships between elected and appointed officials; skill in responsibly following the lead of others when appropriate; ability to communicate sound information and recommendations)
  - ▶ **Mediation/negotiation:** Acting as a neutral party in the resolution of policy disputes (requires knowledge of mediation/negotiation principles; skill in mediation/negotiation techniques)
- 3. Functional and operational expertise and planning:** Practices that contribute to this core content area are:
  - ▶ **Functional/operational expertise:** Understanding the basic principles of service delivery in functional areas—e.g., public safety, community and economic development, human and social services, administrative services, public works (requires knowledge of service areas and delivery options)
  - ▶ **Operational planning:** Anticipating future needs, organizing work operations, and establishing timetables for work units or projects (requires knowledge of technological advances and changing standards; skill in identifying and understanding trends; skill in predicting the impact of service delivery decisions)
- 4. Citizen service:** Determining citizen needs and providing responsive, equitable services to the

community (*requires skill in assessing community needs and allocating resources; knowledge of information gathering techniques*)

5. **Performance measurement/management and quality assurance:** Maintaining a consistently high level of quality in staff work, operational procedures, and service delivery (*requires knowledge of organizational processes; ability to facilitate organizational improvements; ability to set performance/ productivity standards and objectives and measure results*)
6. **Initiative, risk taking, vision, creativity, and innovation:** Setting an example that urges the organization and the community toward experimentation, change, creative problem solving, and prompt action (*requires knowledge of personal leadership style; skill in visioning, shifting perspectives, and identifying options; ability to create an environment that encourages initiative and innovation*). Practices that contribute to this core content area are:
  - ▶ **Initiative and risk-taking:** Demonstrating a personal orientation toward action and accepting responsibility for the results; resisting the status quo and removing stumbling blocks that delay progress toward goals and objectives
  - ▶ **Vision:** Conceptualizing an ideal future state and communicating it to the organization and the community
  - ▶ **Creativity and innovation:** Developing new ideas or practices; applying existing ideas and practices to new situations
7. **Technological literacy:** Demonstrating an understanding of information technology and ensuring that it is incorporated appropriately in plans to improve service delivery, information sharing, organizational communication, and citizen access (*requires knowledge of technological options and their application*)
8. **Democratic advocacy and citizen participation:** Demonstrating a commitment to democratic principles by respecting elected officials, community interest groups, and the decision making process; educating citizens about local government; and acquiring knowledge of the social, economic, and political history of the community (*requires knowledge of democratic principles, political processes, and local government law; skill in group dynamics, communication, and facilitation; ability to appreciate and work with diverse individuals and groups and to follow the community's lead in the democratic process*). Practices that contribute to this core content area are:

- ▶ **Democratic advocacy:** Fostering the values and integrity of representative government and local democracy through action and example; ensuring the effective participation of local government in the intergovernmental system (*requires knowledge and skill in intergovernmental relations*)
  - ▶ **Citizen participation:** Recognizing the right of citizens to influence local decisions and promoting active citizen involvement in local governance
9. **Diversity:** Understanding and valuing the differences among individuals and fostering these values throughout the organization and the community
  10. **Budgeting:** Preparing and administering the budget (*requires knowledge of budgeting principles and practices, revenue sources, projection techniques, and financial control systems; skill in communicating financial information*)
  11. **Financial analysis:** Interpreting financial information to assess the short-term and long-term fiscal condition of the community, determine the cost-effectiveness of programs, and compare alternative strategies (*requires knowledge of analytical techniques and skill in applying them*)
  12. **Human resources management:** Ensuring that the policies and procedures for employee hiring, promotion, performance appraisal, and discipline are equitable, legal, and current; ensuring that human resources are adequate to accomplish programmatic objectives (*requires knowledge of personnel practices and employee relations law; ability to project workforce needs*)
  13. **Strategic planning:** Positioning the organization and the community for events and circumstances that are anticipated in the future (*requires knowledge of long-range and strategic planning techniques; skill in identifying trends that will affect the community; ability to analyze and facilitate policy choices that will benefit the community in the long run*)
  14. **Advocacy and interpersonal communication:** Facilitating the flow of ideas, information, and understanding between and among individuals; advocating effectively in the community interest (*requires knowledge of interpersonal and group communication principles; skill in listening, speaking, and writing; ability to persuade without diminishing the views of others*). Practices that contribute to this core content area are:
    - ▶ **Advocacy:** Communicating personal support for policies, programs, or ideals that serve the best interests of the community

- **Interpersonal communication:** Exchanging verbal and nonverbal messages with others in a way that demonstrates respect for the individual and furthers organizational and community objectives (requires ability to receive verbal and nonverbal cues; skill in selecting the most effective communication method for each interchange)
15. **Presentation skills:** Conveying ideas or information effectively to others (*requires knowledge of presentation techniques and options; ability to match presentation to audience*)
  16. **Media relations:** Communicating information to the media in a way that increases public understanding of local government issues and activities and builds a positive relationship with the press (requires knowledge of media operations and objectives)
  17. **Integrity:** Demonstrating fairness, honesty, and ethical and legal awareness in personal and professional relationships and activities (*requires knowledge of business and personal ethics; ability to understand issues of ethics and integrity in specific situations*). Practices that contribute to this core content area are:
    - **Personal integrity:** Demonstrating accountability for personal actions; conducting personal relationships and activities fairly and honestly
    - **Professional integrity:** Conducting professional relationships and activities fairly, honestly, legally, and in conformance with the **ICMA Code of Ethics** (requires knowledge of administrative ethics and specifically the ICMA Code of Ethics)
    - **Organizational integrity:** Fostering ethical behavior throughout the organization through personal example, management practices, and training (requires knowledge of administrative ethics; ability to instill accountability into operations; and ability to communicate ethical standards and guidelines to others)
  18. **Personal development:** Demonstrating a commitment to a balanced life through ongoing self-renewal and development in order to increase personal capacity (*includes maintaining personal health, living by core values; continuous learning and improvement; and creating interdependent relationships and respect for differences*).



# APPENDIX B:

## Sample résumé

### **Joanne Parks**

6112 Friendly Court  
Sunnytown, CA 96058  
(499) 555-2745 (work); (449) 555-5472 (home); (449) 555-5382 (mobile)  
jparks@sunnytown.com

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### **SUMMARY**

Management professional with strategic planning and operational expertise; proven leadership qualities in the areas of human resources, budgeting, communications, project management, capital improvement planning, intergovernmental relations, and economic development.

### **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

#### **City Manager**

*September 1997–Present*  
*City of Sunnytown, CA*

A suburb of Pleasantville, Sunnytown has a diverse population of 50,000. A full-service city, the organization has 320 employees and a \$70 million budget. Issues relate to growth, economic development, transportation, and aging infrastructure. Appointed by a five-member city council, oversee day-to-day operations and serve as executive director for the Sunnytown Redevelopment Agency.

#### **Key Accomplishments:**

- Initiated first personnel department, including citywide training, employee assistance, tuition reimbursement, and pay-for-performance programs.
- Expanded the use of technology through geographic information systems, and computer technology for police, fire, and emergency vehicles.
- Negotiated with three separate bargaining units for two-year memorandums of understanding.
- Enhanced relationships with regional agencies and chamber of commerce.
- Completed construction of \$1.8 million equestrian center, generating substantial revenue annually for the general fund.

#### **Assistant City Manager**

*August 1991–August 1997*  
*City of Pleasantville, CA*

With a population of over 80,000, Pleasantville employed 450 staff and had an operating budget of \$110 million. Reporting to the city manager, oversaw the general administration of human resources, information technology, budget, and finance divisions with four direct reports.

**Key Accomplishments:**

- Improved customer service and promoted more accessible government by establishing citywide newsletter. Oversaw installation of voice mail, audio agenda, and Internet information systems.
- Prepared and managed four consecutive municipal budgets. Facilitated goal-setting and zero-base budget review.

**Economic Development Manager**

*June 1988–July 1991*

*City of Lone Tree, NV*

Lone Tree is a suburb of Las Vegas with a growing population of 12,000. Reporting to the city manager, oversaw department budget of \$1.3 million and two staff members in the attraction and retention of industrial businesses to bedroom community.

**Key Accomplishments:**

- Development of local legislation establishing the city’s economic development policy and financial incentive program designed to assist basic industrial businesses.
- Development and implementation of economic revitalization strategies in cooperation with various city department and outside organizations.

**Management Analyst I and II, Economic Development**

*September 1985–May 1988*

*City of Golden Leaves, CO*

A suburb of Denver, Golden Leaves has a population of 20,000. Reporting to the economic development manager, held progressively responsible positions overseeing analysis and documentation of economic development policy and incentive programs.

**EDUCATION**

Master of Public Administration, May 1985

University of Denver, CO

Bachelor of Arts, Police Science, May 1983

Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL

**PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**

International City/County Management Association

National Council for Urban Economic Development

City Managers Department of League of California Cities

## APPENDIX C:

# Sample cover letter

October 3, 2005

Mayor Carver E. Richardson and Members of the City Council  
City of Bellewood  
419 Jackson Avenue  
Bellewood, TX 76010

Dear Mayor Richardson and Council Members:

Please consider this letter and résumé as an application for the position of City Manager with the City of Bellewood. I have reviewed the position profile and have conducted research on the community and believe this to be a fit.

For the past eight years, I have served as the City Manager of Sunnyside, California, a community of approximately 50,000 residents. During this period of time, I have implemented a successful budget retrenchment program, initiated a comprehensive economic development program, and put in place the most aggressive capital improvement program in the history of the community. I understand a number of these skills are applicable to the Bellewood City Manager position.

While working for a fiscally conservative City Council, I have also had the opportunity to improve employee productivity, reduce per capita service costs, develop a staff evaluation program, and implement a performance budget. In addition, I have served in a variety of functional areas, including human resources, finance, and economic development.

Should you have any questions or need additional information, please feel free to call me. I sincerely look forward to hearing from you and am most interested in this position.

Sincerely,

Joanne Parks

# APPENDIX D:

## Sample interview questions

These are typical of questions that governing bodies often ask candidates for manager positions, but they may be asked of candidates for other positions as well.

1. Briefly tell us about your professional and personal background and your career goals and achievements.
2. Why are you interested in this position, and what do you have to offer the local government organization and the community as a whole? Why do you wish to leave your current position?
3. You have had the opportunity to review and compare yourself with the recruitment profile, to review background materials on the municipality, and to visit our municipal facilities and community. What are your candid reactions and observations? Are there any city/county/town/village operations with which you have not had previous experience? Any concerns at all about our community or operations?
4. How would you characterize your management style as it relates to your interaction with the mayor, council members, county board, staff, employees, and citizens?
  - A. What things are most important to you in a work situation?
  - B. How do you prefer to work: alone or as part of a team?
  - C. How do you keep informed about projects you have delegated?
  - D. How do you keep informed about employee morale?
5. How do you deal with a large municipal organization such as we have here to ensure that municipal departments are responsive to the needs and requests of elected officials and citizens?
  - A. How many employees have you managed/supervised in your previous position(s)?
  - B. How do you assess the strengths and weaknesses of an organization? How do you identify opportunities to improve the organization?
  - C. How do you motivate, develop, and retain a professional staff?
  - D. Do you stand up strongly for your personal or staff recommendations?
- E. How do you feel about performance evaluation? What process do you employ to set objectives and monitor performance?
- F. What is your philosophy on employee development?
- G. Have you ever had to terminate an employee? What process did you follow?
- H. What experience do you have with labor relations?
9. How do you go about motivating the council, staff, and community groups toward working together for achievement of goals and objectives that are in the overall best interest of the community?
  - A. How do you keep the mayor and council informed of municipal activities and operations?
2. How do you carry out the governing body's policy decisions and directions?
3. How do you determine when to seek the advice of the governing body?
4. What do you do if you seriously disagree with a decision of the governing body?
5. How would the staff be involved with the mayor, council committees, individual council members, citizens, and community groups?
6. In terms of effective financial management activities, what has been your experience in capital improvements programming, goal setting, performance budgeting, financial forecasting, development of alternative sources of revenue, and similar activities? How about bond rating successes?
8. What specific experience have you had involving high growth in communities you have served?
9. What experience have you had in intergovernmental relations?
10. What skills and experience do you have in maintaining a strong and comprehensive public relations effort and projecting a positive image of the city government and community image?
11. How do you work with the media?
12. Do you have an overall philosophy or strategy regarding economic development?

13. What technological innovations have you introduced in previous positions?
14. How do you relate to citizens and citizen groups?
15. What do you consider to be your strongest abilities as a public administrator?
  - A. What skills are you seeking to improve?
  - B. What are your major weaknesses?
  - C. What is the toughest management problem that you have ever faced?
  - D. What can you offer us that others can't?
  - E. What are your career goals, your future plans?
  - F. In your last position, what did you like the most? What did you like the least?
  - G. Why should we hire you?
  - H. What decisions are most difficult for you?
  - I. What are the reasons for your success?
16. Should we decide on you as our final selection and check you out with past employers, employees, and community leadership, what would we hear?
17. Are there any activities or incidents in your background that may reflect negatively on your performance or that would be awkward or embarrassing to us or you if disclosed publicly? Are there any such concerns or circumstances that we should be aware of or discuss at this time?
18. Have you ever been terminated? If yes, please elaborate.
19. Have you or any organization you have served been the subject of litigation over matters pertaining to civil rights violations, sexual harassment, or any similar subjects?
20. We've asked you questions for a good time now; what questions do you have for us? What matters need further discussion? Please be candid.
21. Should you be offered our position, what would be your availability? Your salary expectations? Would we need to agree on any conditions of employment (employee agreement, severance pay, or relocation assistance)?

Also see the "Preparing for an Interview" Wiki in ICMA's Career Resources topic at [icma.org/Wiki/Preparing\\_for\\_an\\_Interview](https://www.icma.org/Wiki/Preparing_for_an_Interview)

# APPENDIX E:

## Compensation checklist

Benefit	Current employer	Recommended	Agreed
Employment agreement	One-year notice	Same	Six months
Salary	\$60,000	\$66,000	\$65,000
Pension	Employee contributes 5%	No participation	OK
Deferred compensation	Employer contributes 7%	12%	12%
Automobile	Leased, full-size; personal use	Same	Fleet vehicle
Health insurance	Full family coverage	Same	OK
Disability insurance	50% of salary after 90 days	Same	60%/120 days
Life insurance	\$100,000	\$150,000	\$100,000
Physical	Executive	Same	OK
Vacation	Three weeks	Same allowable 1st year	2 weeks 1st year 3 weeks 2nd year
Sick leave	68 days	30 credit	OK
Business expense	All reasonable	Same	OK
Conference	State, national	Same	OK
Moving		Total	OK
House-hunting trip		Two with spouse	One
Relocation		City purchase	\$5,000 relocation payment

# APPENDIX F:

## Additional ICMA career resources

ICMA maintains an inventory of career resources for members, and for the profession, including this *Job Hunting Handbook*. Additional resources you may wish to consult during your job search, and throughout your career, include the following:

### Model Employment Agreement <http://icma.org/mea>

This document serves as a model employment agreement template for municipal government administrators. Complete in its content, the agreement covers a wide array of topics, including business expenditures, performance evaluation, relocation expenses, and indemnification. It provides additional language on various topics, allowing local governments to choose the option that best fits their organization.

ICMA Members can [download an editable copy \(in Microsoft Word format\)](#) to modify according to their needs. Updated and expanded, 2012.

### Recruitment Guidelines Handbook <http://icma.org/recruitmentguidelines>

This handbook presents guidelines to help council members conduct a successful recruitment process. While no two jurisdictions require precisely the same qualifications and responsibilities from their chief administrative officer, the guidelines outlined here provide the basis for determining priorities. These guidelines will enable local government officials to go about recruiting and selecting the best possible professional for their needs.

This handbook includes a discussion of

- resources available to assist in the process conducting the recruitment
- reviewing applications
- identifying and interviewing finalists
- negotiating compensation
- handling the transition.

Exhibits present resources and publications available, suggested interview questions, and a summary checklist and timetable.

### Manager Evaluations Handbook <http://icma.org/evaluations>

This complimentary handbook is intended to highlight the value of a formal manager evaluation process and to assist local elected officials in the design of an effective evaluation tool. Local government managers and administrators are encouraged to reference and review the handbook with an eye toward working with their elected bodies to develop formal, mutually agreed upon processes for their own evaluations.

### First-Time Administrator's Handbook <http://icma.org/fta>

First published in 2000 and revised in 2010, this handbook has served as a guide for many first-time administrators. The document covers five areas: first administrator in a community, first time as an administrator, promotion to administrator from within, new to local government, and resources. The publication also includes tips and checklists for the first-time administrator.

### Acting Manager's Handbook <http://icma.org/acting>

The ICMA Task Force on Serving as an Acting Manager developed this collection of information and advice to help the acting manager make the most of a sometimes unexpected opportunity.

### Breaking into Local Government Guide <http://icma.org/breakingintolg>

This guide is the culmination of work done by ICMA member volunteers over a two-year period. Along with case studies that highlight the transition

of nontraditional managers into professional administrator positions, it provides a number of resources in the appendix that will help those who aspire to follow the same career path.

Cases include career changers entering the profession from the private sector, military, and

other government sectors. In addition, survey results are included and analyzed reviewing the paths that respondents took to enter the profession, transferable skills, reasons for changing, first positions held in local government, and more.

**If you are mentoring public administration students or early-career professionals, these resources can help:**

## Management Internships: A Guidebook for Local Governments

<http://icma.org/internships>

This internship resource was revised and updated in 2012 by combining and amending two existing ICMA resources: the Model Internship Guidelines and the Internship Toolkit. Special thanks to the 2011–2012 ICMA Task Force on Internships, which reviewed these two resources, streamlined existing content, and added new sections where necessary.

Keeping with the goals of both original documents, this new resource is intended to help local government managers and MPA programs work together to develop meaningful internship

opportunities that benefit both the student and the local government. Content highlights:

- Choosing the Type of Internship
- Attracting the Best Talent
- Compensation and Financial Considerations
- Supervising and Evaluating Interns
- Top Ten Best Practices

## Careers in Local Government Management

<http://icma.org/careersguide>

A Wiki available in ICMA's Knowledge Network to help students, early-career professionals, and career changers determine whether professional local government management is a career option they want to consider.



# APPENDIX G:

## List of state and municipal associations

### **International City/County Management Association (ICMA)**

777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: 202-289-4262

#### **JobCenter**

*Rates/Information:*

[www.icma.org/en/icma/career\\_network/employers/difference](http://www.icma.org/en/icma/career_network/employers/difference)

### **American Society for Public Administration (ASPA)**

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20004  
Phone: 202-393-7878

#### **PublicServiceCareers.org (online)**

*Rates/Information:*

[www.publicservicecareers.org/?pageid=617](http://www.publicservicecareers.org/?pageid=617)

### **National Association of Counties (NACo)**

25 Massachusetts Avenue NW, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20001  
Phone: 202-393-6226 or 1-888-407-6226

#### **JobsOnline (website) and County News Job Market/Classified Ad (newspaper)**

*Rates/Submissions:*

[www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline/Pages/JobOnlineSubmission.aspx](http://www.naco.org/programs/jobsonline/Pages/JobOnlineSubmission.aspx)

### **National Association of County Administrators (NACA)**

777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 500  
Washington, DC 20002  
Email: [naca@icma.org](mailto:naca@icma.org)

### **National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA)**

777 North Capitol Street NE, Suite 807  
Washington, DC 20002  
Phone: 202-408-9300

#### **NFBPA Career Center**

*Ad Rates/Information:* [careers.nfbpa.org/rates.cfm](http://careers.nfbpa.org/rates.cfm)

Phone: 1-866-964-2765

*E-mail (Job Posting Sales):*

[postings@boxwoodtech.com](mailto:postings@boxwoodtech.com)

### **National League of Cities (NLC)**

1301 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Suite 550  
Washington, DC 20004

#### **Nation's Cities Weekly Classifieds**

*Rates/Submissions:*

[www.nlc.org/news-center/nations-cities-weekly/classifieds/ncw-submit-classified](http://www.nlc.org/news-center/nations-cities-weekly/classifieds/ncw-submit-classified)

### **International Hispanic Network (IHN)**

2107 North First Street, Suite 470  
San José, CA 95131  
Phone: 408-392-0232

#### **Job Posting**

*Rates/Submissions:*

[www.ihnonline.org/jobsaddform.asp](http://www.ihnonline.org/jobsaddform.asp)

## STATE MUNICIPAL LEAGUES

### **Alabama League of Municipalities**

([www.alalm.org](http://www.alalm.org))

535 Adams Avenue  
Montgomery, AL 36104  
Phone: 334-262-2566

#### **Municipal Classified Ads**

*Posting Information:* [carrieb@alalm.org](mailto:carrieb@alalm.org)

**Alaska Municipal League** ([www.akml.org](http://www.akml.org))

217 Second Street, Suite 200  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone: 907-586-1325

**AML Classifieds**

*Informational Brochure:*

[www.akml.org/uploads/MunicipalClassifiedAdGuidelines.pdf](http://www.akml.org/uploads/MunicipalClassifiedAdGuidelines.pdf)

*Phone:* 1-877-636-1325

*Email:* [info@akml.org](mailto:info@akml.org)

**League of Arizona Cities and Towns**

([www.azleague.org](http://www.azleague.org))

1820 West Washington Street  
Phoenix, AZ 85007  
Phone: 602-258-5786

**Municipal Employment Opportunities**

*Rates/Information:*

[www.azleague.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=jobs.main](http://www.azleague.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=jobs.main)

*Email:* [jobs@azleague.org](mailto:jobs@azleague.org)

**Arkansas Municipal League** ([www.arml.org](http://www.arml.org))

301 West 2nd Street  
North Little Rock, AR 72115  
Phone: 501-374-3484

**City & Town Municipal Mart**

*Rates/Information:*

[www.arml.org/classifieds.html](http://www.arml.org/classifieds.html)

*Submissions:* 501-374-3484

**League of California Cities** ([www.cacities.org](http://www.cacities.org))

1400 K Street, Suite 400  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
Phone: 916-658-8200

**Western Cities**

*Rates/Submissions:*

[www.westerncity.com/Western-City/](http://www.westerncity.com/Western-City/)

*Job-Opportunities/How-to-Post-a-Job*

**Colorado Municipal League** ([www.cml.org](http://www.cml.org))

1144 Sherman Street  
Denver, CO 80203  
Phone: 303-831-6411 or 1-866-578-0936

**CareerLink**

*Postings:* [www.cml.org/CareerLink.aspx](http://www.cml.org/CareerLink.aspx)

**Connecticut Conference of Municipalities**

([www.ccm-ct.org](http://www.ccm-ct.org))

900 Chapel Street, 9th Floor  
New Haven, CT 06510  
Phone: 203-498-3000

**Municipal Job Bank**

*Information/Rates/Submissions:*

[www.ccm-ct.org/Plugs/job-bank.aspx](http://www.ccm-ct.org/Plugs/job-bank.aspx)

**Delaware League of Local Governments**

([www.dllg.org](http://www.dllg.org))

P.O. Box 484  
Dover, DE 19903  
Phone: 302-678-0991

**\*Provides no employment listings\***

**Florida League of Cities**

([www.floridaleagueofcities.com](http://www.floridaleagueofcities.com))

301 South Bronough Street, Suite 300  
Tallahassee, FL 32301  
Phone: 850-222-9684 or 1-800-342-8112

**FLC E-News**

*Information/Submissions:*

[www.floridaleagueofcities.com/Publications.aspx?CNID=179](http://www.floridaleagueofcities.com/Publications.aspx?CNID=179)

*Phone:* 850-322-7221

**Georgia Municipal Association**

([www.gmanet.com](http://www.gmanet.com))

201 Pryor Street SW  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
Phone: 404-688-0472

**Classifieds/Marketplace**

*Submissions:*

[www.glga.org/SubmitListing.aspx](http://www.glga.org/SubmitListing.aspx)

*Phone:* 678-686-6209

**Hawaii** (none available)**Association of Idaho Cities** ([www.idahocities.org](http://www.idahocities.org))

3100 South Vista Avenue, Suite 310  
Boise, ID 83705  
Phone 208-344-8594

**Employment Opportunities**

*Information/Rates/Submissions:*

[www.idahocities.org/index.aspx?nid=213](http://www.idahocities.org/index.aspx?nid=213)

**Illinois Municipal League** ([www.iml.org](http://www.iml.org))

500 East Capitol Avenue  
Springfield, IL 62701  
Phone: 217-525-1220

**Classifieds**

*Information/Submissions:*

[www.iml.org/contact.cfm?user=rturner&subject=Submit%20Classified%20Ad](http://www.iml.org/contact.cfm?user=rturner&subject=Submit%20Classified%20Ad)

*Rates:* [www.iml.org/page.cfm?category=640](http://www.iml.org/page.cfm?category=640)

**Indiana Association of Cities and Towns**

([www.citiesandtowns.org](http://www.citiesandtowns.org))

200 South Meridian Street, Suite 340  
Indianapolis, IN 46225  
Phone: 317-237-6200

**Municipal Dispatch**

*Contact Publications and Marketing Director  
Staff Directory:*

[www.citiesandtowns.org/topic/subtopic.php?fDD=2-15](http://www.citiesandtowns.org/topic/subtopic.php?fDD=2-15)

**Iowa League of Cities** ([www.iowaleague.org](http://www.iowaleague.org))

317 Sixth Avenue, Suite 800  
Des Moines, IA 50309  
Phone: 515-244-7282

**Classifieds**

*Information/Rates/Submissions:*

[www.iowaleague.org/Pages/SubmitClassified.aspx](http://www.iowaleague.org/Pages/SubmitClassified.aspx)

**League of Kansas Municipalities** ([www.lkm.org](http://www.lkm.org))

300 SW Eighth Avenue  
Topeka, KS 66603  
Phone: 785-354-9565

**Kansas Government Journal (and online)**

*Rates:* [www.lkm.org/classifieds/jobs](http://www.lkm.org/classifieds/jobs)

*Submissions:* [classifieds@lkm.org](mailto:classifieds@lkm.org)

**Kentucky League of Cities** ([www.klc.org](http://www.klc.org))

100 East Vine Street, Suite 800  
Lexington, KY 40507  
Phone: 859-977-3700 or 1-800-876-4552

**City Job Opportunities Online**

*Submissions:* [www.klc.org/employment\\_post.asp](http://www.klc.org/employment_post.asp)

**Louisiana Municipal Association** ([www.lma.org](http://www.lma.org))

700 North 10th Street  
Baton Rouge, LA 70802  
Phone: 225-344-5001 or 1-800-234-8274

**Maine Municipal Association** ([www.memun.org](http://www.memun.org))

60 Community Drive  
Augusta, ME 04330  
Phone: 207-623-8428

**Job Bank and Classifieds**

*Information/Rates:*

[www2.memun.org/public/wantads/itemlist.cfm](http://www2.memun.org/public/wantads/itemlist.cfm)

*Submissions:* [ResourceCenter@memun.org](mailto:ResourceCenter@memun.org)

**Maryland Municipal League**

([www.mdmunicipal.org](http://www.mdmunicipal.org))

1212 West Street  
Annapolis, MD 21401  
Phone: 410-268-5514 or 1-800-492-7121

**Classifieds**

*Submissions:* [stevel@mdmunicipal.org](mailto:stevel@mdmunicipal.org)

**Massachusetts Municipal Association**

([www.mma.org](http://www.mma.org))

One Winthrop Square  
Boston, Massachusetts 02110  
Phone: 617-426-7272

**The Beacon (and online)**

*Information/Rates:*

[www.mma.org/ad-rates-and-details](http://www.mma.org/ad-rates-and-details)

*Submissions:* [www.mma.org/ad-submission-form](http://www.mma.org/ad-submission-form)

**Michigan Municipal League** ([www.mml.org](http://www.mml.org))

1675 Green Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48105  
Phone: 734-662-3246 or 1-800-653-2483

**Classifieds**

*Information/Rates:*

[www.mml.org/classifieds/guidelines.html](http://www.mml.org/classifieds/guidelines.html)

*Submissions:*

[www.mml.org/classifieds/classifiedsform.php](http://www.mml.org/classifieds/classifiedsform.php)

**League of Minnesota Cities** ([www.lmc.org](http://www.lmc.org))

145 University Avenue West  
St. Paul, MN 55103  
Phone: 651-281-1200 or 1-800-925-1122

**City Job Opportunities**

*Information/Rates:*

[www.lmc.org/page/1/posting-city-jobs.jsp](http://www.lmc.org/page/1/posting-city-jobs.jsp)

*Submissions:* [HR-CityAds@lmc.org](mailto:HR-CityAds@lmc.org)

## Mississippi Municipal League

([www.mmlonline.com](http://www.mmlonline.com))

600 East Amite Street, Suite 104

Jackson, MS 39201

Phone: 601-353-5854

### Classifieds

[www.mmlonline.com/classifieds.aspx](http://www.mmlonline.com/classifieds.aspx)

Contact MML Staff – Staff Directory:

[www.mmlonline.com/contact.aspx](http://www.mmlonline.com/contact.aspx)

## Missouri Municipal League ([www.mocities.com](http://www.mocities.com))

1727 Southridge Drive

Jefferson City, MO 65109

Phone: 573-635-9134

### Career Center

Information/Rates:

[www.mocities.com/networking](http://www.mocities.com/networking)

Submissions: [tshaw@mocities.com](mailto:tshaw@mocities.com)

## Montana League of Cities and Towns

([www.mlct.org](http://www.mlct.org))

208 North Montana Avenue, Suite 106

Helena, MT 59601

Phone: 406-442-8768

### Job Openings

Submissions: Contact Office Manager

Staff Directory: [www.mlct.org/about-mlct/staff.html](http://www.mlct.org/about-mlct/staff.html)

## League of Nebraska Municipalities

([www.lonm.org](http://www.lonm.org))

1335 L Street, #A

Lincoln, NE 68508-2596

Phone: 402-476-2829

### Job Postings

Information/Rates/Submissions:

[www.lonm.org/careers.html](http://www.lonm.org/careers.html)

## Nevada League of Cities and Municipalities

([www.nvleague.org/admin/about.htm](http://www.nvleague.org/admin/about.htm))

310 South Curry Street

Carson City, NV 89703

Phone: 775-882-2121

## New Hampshire Local Government Center

([www.nhlgc.org](http://www.nhlgc.org))

25 Triangle Park Drive

Concord, NH 03301

Phone: 603-224-7447

### Classifieds

Information/Rates/Submissions:

[www.nhlgc.org/classifieds/submitad.asp](http://www.nhlgc.org/classifieds/submitad.asp)

## New Jersey State League of Municipalities

([www.njslom.org](http://www.njslom.org))

222 West State Street

Trenton, NJ 08608

Phone: 609-695-3481

### Classifieds

Information/Rates/Submissions:

[www.njslom.org/classifieds\\_jobs.html](http://www.njslom.org/classifieds_jobs.html)

## New Mexico Municipal League ([www.nmml.org](http://www.nmml.org))

1229 Paseo de Peralta

Santa Fe, NM 87501

Phone: 1-800-432-2036

### Classifieds

Information/Submissions:

[www.nmml.org/blog/category/classifieds/positions-available](http://www.nmml.org/blog/category/classifieds/positions-available)

## New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials ([www.nycom.org](http://www.nycom.org))

119 Washington Avenue

Albany, NY 12210

Phone: 518-463-1185

### Help Wanted Classifieds

Information/Submissions:

[www.nycom.org/mn\\_class/helpwanted.asp#](http://www.nycom.org/mn_class/helpwanted.asp#)

## North Carolina League of Municipalities

([www.nclm.org](http://www.nclm.org))

215 North Dawson Street

Raleigh, NC 27603

Phone: 919-715-4000

### Southern City, League Letter, and/or online:

Information:

[www.nclm.org/resource-center/Pages/jobs.aspx](http://www.nclm.org/resource-center/Pages/jobs.aspx)

Rates/Submissions:

[www.nclm.org/programs-services/publications/Pages/southern-city.aspx](http://www.nclm.org/programs-services/publications/Pages/southern-city.aspx)

**North Dakota League of Cities** ([www.ndlc.org](http://www.ndlc.org))

410 East Front Avenue  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
Phone: 701-223-3518

**Municipal Ads – Job Opportunities**

[www.ndlc.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={D835005A-831C-4BB1-BF46-7D93A07A0083}](http://www.ndlc.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={D835005A-831C-4BB1-BF46-7D93A07A0083})

Contact NDLC Staff – Staff Directory:

[www.ndlc.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={846F9FCA-A6EE-4082-B241-8DA3E991D99A}](http://www.ndlc.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={846F9FCA-A6EE-4082-B241-8DA3E991D99A})

**Ohio Municipal League** ([www.omloho.org](http://www.omloho.org))

175 South Third Street, Suite 510  
Columbus, OH 43215  
Phone: 614-221-4349

**Classified Advertisements**

Information/Rates/Submissions:  
[www.omloho.org/Classifieds.htm](http://www.omloho.org/Classifieds.htm)

**Oklahoma Municipal League** ([www.oml.org](http://www.oml.org))

201 Northeast 23rd Street  
Oklahoma City, OK 73105  
Phone: 405-528-7515

**Job Listings**

Information/Rates/Submissions:  
[www.okml.webs.com/joblistings.htm](http://www.okml.webs.com/joblistings.htm)

**League of Oregon Cities** ([www.orcities.org](http://www.orcities.org))

1201 Court Street NE, Suite 200  
Salem, OR 97301  
Phone: 503-588-6550

**Personnel Recruitment – Jobs**

Information/Rates/Submissions:  
[www.orcities.org/JobsInterims/Jobs/tabid/816/language/en-US/Default.aspx](http://www.orcities.org/JobsInterims/Jobs/tabid/816/language/en-US/Default.aspx)  
Available Interim Candidates:  
[www.orcities.org/JobsInterims/Interims/tabid/5849/language/en-US/Default.aspx](http://www.orcities.org/JobsInterims/Interims/tabid/5849/language/en-US/Default.aspx)

**Pennsylvania League of Cities & Municipalities** ([www.plcm.org](http://www.plcm.org))

414 North Second Street  
Harrisburg, PA 17101  
Phone: 717-236-9469

**Municipal Job Junction**

Information/Rates/Submissions:

[www.plcm.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={24C2F4FE-80F6-4E58-BA9F-53345F31E1D7}&DE](http://www.plcm.org/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={24C2F4FE-80F6-4E58-BA9F-53345F31E1D7}&DE)

**Rhode Island League of Cities and Towns**

([www.rileague.org](http://www.rileague.org))

One State Street, Suite 502  
Providence, RI 02908  
Phone: 401-272-3434

**Available Positions**

Information/Submissions:

[www.rileague.org/site/classifieds/available.html](http://www.rileague.org/site/classifieds/available.html)

**Municipal Association of South Carolina**

([www.masc.sc](http://www.masc.sc))

1411 Gervais Street  
Columbia, SC 29211  
Phone: 803-799-9574

**Job Openings:**

Information/Submissions:

[www.masc.sc/municipalities/Pages/Postinganadvertisement.aspx](http://www.masc.sc/municipalities/Pages/Postinganadvertisement.aspx)

**South Dakota Municipal League**

([www.sdmunicipalleague.org](http://www.sdmunicipalleague.org))

208 Island Drive  
Fort Pierre, SD 57532  
Phone: 605-224-8654

**Classifieds**

Information/Rates/Submissions:

[www.sdmunicipalleague.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_JOB&SEC=%7B9C4C9345-D0E6-470D-A708-181FD9B26F51%7D](http://www.sdmunicipalleague.org/index.asp?Type=B_JOB&SEC=%7B9C4C9345-D0E6-470D-A708-181FD9B26F51%7D)

**Tennessee Municipal League** ([www.tml1.org](http://www.tml1.org))

226 Capitol Boulevard, Suite 710  
Nashville, TN 37219  
Phone: 615-255-6416

**Classifieds**

Contact Administrative Assistant – Staff Directory:

[www.tml1.org/staff.php?ln\\_ses=1%7C4](http://www.tml1.org/staff.php?ln_ses=1%7C4)

**Texas Municipal League** ([www.tml.org](http://www.tml.org))

1821 Rutherford Lane, Suite 400  
Austin, TX 78754  
Phone: 512-231-7400

**Career Center**

*Information/Submission:* [www.tml.org/careercenter.asp](http://www.tml.org/careercenter.asp)

**Utah League of Cities and Towns** ([www.ulct.org](http://www.ulct.org))

50 South 600 East, Suite 150  
Salt Lake City, UT 84102  
Phone: 801-328-1601 or 1-800-852-8528

**Job Bank**

*Submissions:* [www.ulct.org/jobbank/index.html](http://www.ulct.org/jobbank/index.html)

**Vermont League of Cities & Towns**

([www.vlct.org](http://www.vlct.org))

89 Main Street, Suite 4  
Montpelier, VT 05602  
Phone: 802-229-9111

**Classifieds**

*Information/Rates/Submissions:*  
[www.vlct.org/marketplace/classifiedads](http://www.vlct.org/marketplace/classifiedads)

**Virginia Municipal League** ([www.vml.org](http://www.vml.org))

13 East Franklin Street  
Richmond, VA 23219  
Phone: 804-649-8471

**Marketplace – Jobs in Local Government**

*Information/Rates/Submissions:*  
[www.vml.org/JOBS/Jobs.html](http://www.vml.org/JOBS/Jobs.html)

**Association of Washington Cities**

([www.awcnet.org](http://www.awcnet.org))  
1076 Franklin Street SE  
Olympia, WA 98501  
Phone: 360-753-4137

**JobNet**

*Information/Submissions:*  
[www.awcnet.org/Jobnet/ForEmployers.aspx](http://www.awcnet.org/Jobnet/ForEmployers.aspx)

**West Virginia Municipal League**

([www.wvml.org](http://www.wvml.org))  
2020 Kanawha Boulevard  
Charleston, WV 25311  
Phone: 304-342-5564 or 1-800-344-7702

**Classifieds**

*Information/Submissions:* [wvml@wvml.org](mailto:wvml@wvml.org)

**League of Wisconsin Municipalities**

([www.lwm-info.org](http://www.lwm-info.org))  
122 West Washington Avenue, Suite 300  
Madison, WI 53703  
Phone: 608-267-2380

**Classifieds**

*Information/Rates/Submissions:*  
[www.lwm-info.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_](http://www.lwm-info.org/index.asp?Type=B_JOB&SEC=%7B428BF440-C1B3-494D-8B98-837FE87BCFCA%7D)  
[JOB&SEC = %7B428BF440-C1B3-494D-](http://www.lwm-info.org/index.asp?Type=B_JOB&SEC=%7B428BF440-C1B3-494D-8B98-837FE87BCFCA%7D)  
[8B98-837FE87BCFCA%7D](http://www.lwm-info.org/index.asp?Type=B_JOB&SEC=%7B428BF440-C1B3-494D-8B98-837FE87BCFCA%7D)

**Wyoming Association of Municipalities**

([www.wyomuni.org](http://www.wyomuni.org))  
315 West 27th Street  
Cheyenne, WY 82001  
Phone: 307-632-0398

**Classifieds**

*Information:*  
[www.wyomuni.org/index.asp?Type=B\\_](http://www.wyomuni.org/index.asp?Type=B_JOB&SEC={AE206698-9002-49A0-983C-9CFCD28D226})  
[JOB&SEC = {AE206698-9002-49A0-983C-](http://www.wyomuni.org/index.asp?Type=B_JOB&SEC={AE206698-9002-49A0-983C-9CFCD28D226})  
[9CFCD28D226}](http://www.wyomuni.org/index.asp?Type=B_JOB&SEC={AE206698-9002-49A0-983C-9CFCD28D226})  
*Submissions:* [wam@wyomuni.org](mailto:wam@wyomuni.org)

# APPENDIX H:

## ICMA Task Force on Job Hunting resources (2004–2006)

Gordon R. Anderson (Chair)  
Assistant City Manager, Santa Monica, CA

Adam T. Brumbaugh  
Township Manager, College Township, PA

Robert J. Bruner Jr.  
Assistant City Manager, Ypsilanti, MI

Barry A. Burton  
County Administrator, Lake County, IL

Ian M. Coyle  
Village Treasurer, Brockport, NY

Bernice T. Duletski  
Assistant County Manager, Johnson County, KS

Frances A. Gonzalez  
Assistant City Manager, San Antonio, TX

Bobbie R. Hamilton  
Senior Economic Development Specialist,  
San Antonio, TX

David W. Johnston  
Village Administrator, Rantoul, IL

Christal L. Kliewer  
Assistant to the City Manager,  
City of Grand Prairie, TX

J. Thomas McCarty  
County Administrator, Eau Claire County, WI

Shawn P. McElroy  
Cleveland State University, OH

Bobbi C. Peckham  
Partner, Peckham & McKenney, Sacramento, CA

Sharon L. Peterson  
Assistant Village Administrator, La Grange, IL

Edward L. Sealover  
County Manager, Habersham County, GA

Steven E. Sheiffer  
City Manager, Janesville, WI

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ICMA Staff Liaison

Byron D. Smith  
Assistant City Manager, Poplar Bluff, MO

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Assistant Township Manager, Lower Gwynedd, PA

Harry Still III  
Chief Executive Officer, Etowah County, AL

Alesia Grace Thompson  
IT Coordinator, Cincinnati, OH

Patrick J. Thompson  
County Administrator, Jefferson County, CO

Steven T. Thompson  
Chief Financial Officer/Assistant City Manager,  
Virginia Beach, VA

David C. Toland  
Special Assistant, District of Columbia

Ryan J. Waller  
Administrative Assistant to the City Manager,  
Highland Park, IL

## ABOUT ICMA

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ICMA advances professional local government worldwide. Its mission is to create excellence in local governance by developing and advancing professional management of local government. ICMA, the City/County Management Association, provides member support; publications, data, and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to more than 12,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA's members affect 185 million individuals living in thousands of communities, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas.

# ICMA

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