

ICMA Executive Board

Report on Feedback Received During Member Engagement Sessions Regarding ICMA's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiatives

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Introduction

In the late summer of 2021, the ICMA Executive Board became aware of ICMA members expressing concerns with the association's work on racial equity and social justice (RESJ), and how that work had come to be viewed as being "political" or leftist, ultimately putting into question whether ICMA was straying from its core mission of leadership and professional development, and instead promoting a political agenda.

In response to these concerns, ICMA President Troy Brown convened a meeting on November 11, 2021 in Washington, DC, with a group of concerned ICMA members¹, select ICMA board members² and ICMA staff³ for the purpose of having a Courageous Conversation about ICMA's focus on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), and how that focus intersects with the ICMA Code of Ethics, the *Envision ICMA* Strategic Plan, and other association priorities. The meeting was planned and facilitated by Julia Novak of The Novak Consulting Group, now Raftelis. What emerged from the conversation was that while there was general consensus that "the Association is not broken," everyone came to a better understanding of each other's views, which was considered a win. To that end, President Brown committed to having a broader conversation with the membership before following up to the group with a formal response from the ICMA Executive Board.

Following this conversation, at their December 2021 quarterly meeting, the ICMA Executive Board made a commitment to take a grassroots approach to engaging ICMA's membership across all five U.S. regions in a candid discussion to obtain feedback on the appropriate role of ICMA in responding to potentially divisive societal issues. This feedback was obtained through a series of listening sessions held at ICMA's 2022 Regional Conferences⁴ as well as during sessions held at

¹ The group of concerned ICMA members included Sam Gaston, City Manager, Mountain Brook, AL; Matt Candland, Township Manager, Township of Upper Moreland, PA; Robert Johnston, City Manager, Clinton, OK; James Fisher, Manager in Transition, Brenham, TX; Gretchen DiFante, City Manager, Pelham, AL; Sheldon Hudson, Town Manager, Millsboro, DE; and Chris Anderson, City Administrator, Central City, NE.

² ICMA board members in attendance included Troy Brown, ICMA President, City Manager, Moorpark, CA; Jim Malloy, ICMA Past President, City Manager, Lexington, MA; Jeff Towery, ICMA President-Elect, City Manager, McMinnville, OR; Molly Mehner, ICMA Senior Midwest Regional Manager, Deputy City Manager, Cape Girardeau, MO; and Michael Kaigler, ICMA Senior Southeast Regional Vice President, Assistant County Manager, Chatham County, GA.

³ ICMA staff in attendance included Marc Ott, CEO/Executive Director; and Ray Baray, ICMA Chief of Staff.

⁴ ICMA's 2022 Regional Conferences were held in Atlanta, GA; Irving, TX; St. Louis, MO; Boston, MA; and Stevenson, WA.

meetings of ICMA's state association partners.

At each listening session, either an Executive Board member and/or ICMA Regional Director facilitated these conversations by making a few introductory remarks to explain the purpose of these feedback sessions, and then asking those in attendance to discuss and provide written responses to the following series of questions:

- *What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive societal issues?*
- *What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?*
- *Given ICMA's most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left-leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?*
- *Do you believe the ICMA Executive Board's statement on systemic racism and associated six action steps are in line with ICMA's mission and vision, as articulated in Envision ICMA?*
- *Do you feel that educating the ICMA membership about DEI is relevant to the profession in these times of political divisiveness and heightened racial tensions?*
- *Are there areas in ICMA's DEI work that should receive more emphasis or less emphasis?*

The ICMA Executive Board made a commitment to collect and analyze the feedback from these listening sessions to discuss, develop, and communicate a path forward to the ICMA membership. The Board initially planned to use their June 2022 quarterly meeting as the time to review and synthesize all feedback received; however, at the time there were still a number of state association meetings that were on the schedule beyond June, so the June meeting was used to provide a status report on the listening sessions.

Attached to this report are three Appendices which (A.) include all feedback received during listening sessions held from December 2022 to August 2022 at both ICMA's Regional Conferences and state association meetings, and (B) outline the organizations who were contacted, and those with whom engagement sessions were conducted. Appendix C also summarizes the member feedback regarding ICMA's racial equity and social justice work that was received via ICMA's 2022 Membership Survey.

Major Findings/Themes from Member Engagement Sessions:

1. Many members are supportive of ICMA having a role regarding RESJ/DEI issues, so long as there is clear alignment with the ICMA Code of Ethics and ICMA's mission. It is important to members that ICMA's role on these issues not be perceived as political or divisive. Many expressed a desire to have clear guidelines and/or criteria that would guide decisions

regarding whether, and when ICMA would issue a statement on a particular issue. A few respondents expressed concerns that ICMA has “lost its way”

2. ICMA’s members look to the association to serve as a source of information and best practices, and RESJ/DEI is no exception. Members expressed that they are looking to ICMA for thought leadership on how to deal with the challenges that RESJ/DEI presents to their communities and/or in their organizations.
3. What members want most of all from ICMA is to be the “go to” resource to help them get assistance in dealing with specific issues or “wicked problems” facing local governments. They expressed gratitude for the resources and trainings that ICMA provides, but would appreciate better communication to make these resources easier to identify and access.
4. Members acknowledged that RESJ/DEI is an important issue but should not be the top issue for ICMA. There is a perception among some members that this issue has received too much prioritization, while other core programs (e.g., leadership and professional development) have seen a reduction in focus.
5. The terminology used to describe these efforts matters. When framed as DEI, these issues tend to be viewed more positively; whereas when framed as “social justice,” they are viewed as being more political and/or polarizing.
6. To the extent possible, members would prefer these issues to be presented factually – ICMA should be careful not to be seen as “taking sides.”

2022 Membership Survey

In addition to the hundreds of comments received through the listening sessions, ICMA also reached out to its membership by including several DEI questions in its most recent Survey. The survey was conducted over a three-week period in May 2022, which was sent via email to 12,361 members with a valid email address. 2,850 responses were received for a 23 percent response rate.

The survey questions specifically asked members about their overall frequency and use of ICMA’s DEI-related content. Among the key findings:

- Approximately half of all respondents had never (19%) or rarely (28%) used ICMA’s DEI resources or content in the past year. 38% said they used these resources sometimes; 12% utilized them often, and 3% used them regularly.
 - Newer members (first year up to 10 years) were more likely than older members (30+ year members) to use these resources.

- Collectively, half of respondents agree (39%) or strongly agree (12%) that ICMA's DEI resources enhanced their knowledge of DEI-related issues. 35% were neutral.
 - The rate of disagreement is highest among a segment of long-tenured members, but across the range of respondents, 50% still agree or strongly agree that ICMA's DEI resources have increased their understanding.
- Overall, 39% (30% agree and 9% strongly agree) that ICMA's DEI resources have been helpful in addressing issues in their communities. 45% were neutral.
 - Affiliate members were more likely to use ICMA's DEI resources in their communities, as were newer members (especially those within their first year).

Conclusion

A copy of this report will be presented to the ICMA Executive Board at their September board meeting in Columbus, Ohio. At that time, the board will discuss a path forward on how this information will be presented to the ICMA membership as well as any other actions.

Special thanks go out to the many ICMA members and attendees who participated in 24 in-person listening sessions during the nine-month period from December 2021 to August 2022 and provided great feedback. Also, kudos to all of the state associations that generously accepted ICMA's request to host these listening sessions at their various state meetings, which greatly enhanced the outreach and feedback received from the local government community. Much appreciation also to ICMA staff that helped to facilitate this listening tour throughout the five ICMA regions across the US. And finally, a big shout out to the entire ICMA Executive Board who fully supported this effort and gave of their valuable time to moderate these sessions in their respective regions, recognizing that "listening to the membership" continues to be a hallmark practice at ICMA.

Appendix A

Member Feedback from Listening Sessions on ICMA's Racial Equity and Social Justice Initiatives

This appendix includes feedback received at listening sessions held from December 2021 to August 2022 at both ICMA's Regional Conferences and State Association meetings.

Southeast Regional Conference – Friday, March 4, 2022 – Ritz-Carlton Atlanta:

ICMA President Troy Brown opened the Atlanta session by telling attendees that he and the Executive Board members that were present wanted to engage the membership in a conversation to learn about their professional development needs and concerns. He said the Board had recently heard from several members who expressed their concerns about ICMA becoming “political and left-leaning,” and that its focus on diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) was becoming divisive. President Brown said the town hall sessions would be held at each of the five Regional Conferences and said that he would be requesting similar conversations to be held at state association meetings. Feedback from these sessions would be collected and compiled into a report to inform a conversation at the board's June 2022 meeting where a strategy would be developed, and later, communicated to the entire ICMA membership.

After his remarks, President Brown displayed the following six discussion questions on a screen and asked attendees to share their input by either using the aisle microphone at the center of the meeting room or to submit their written comments on notecards:

- 1. What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive societal issues?**

Report Out from Groups:

- Philip Harris (City of North Miami, FL): commends ICMA leadership for their DEI work; important to push this work down to the local level. Understand that what we do in this space is hard.
- Sam Gaston (City of Mountain Brook, AL): for issues to be fairly considered, you need to have a balanced view; understand that it's a tough thing to do.
- Jim Malloy (City of Lexington, MA): encouraged those attending the session to provide feedback because ICMA has issues that need to be discussed, like whether ICMA should issue a statement on the Russian

invasion of Ukraine; should ICMA be doing this? That's the feedback the leadership needs.

- Philip Harris (City of North Miami, FL): ICMA should look for ways to have authentic conversations on a regional basis; do them virtual; technical assistance would be helpful, with members serving as volunteers.
- Christopher Sponn,(MPA, an ICMA Local Government Management Fellow). I am confused by the question. Responsibility of ICMA and us to get involved. We need to be on every issue or else special interest groups dominate. But be balanced because there are lots of things happening that we could comment on. ICMA should make a comment on Ukraine; cities and towns are being impacted in Ukraine.
- Hasco Craver (City of Newman, GA): joined ICMA for two reasons, build my toolkit and provide the resources I need and to be with a group of like-minded people who want to deliver good governance; ICMA needs to stay focused to stay true to ICMA's being.
- Horace McHugh (President/FCCMA): ICMA needs to provide guidance on social issues, like unemployment, homelessness, drug abuse; all these need to be discussed by ICMA to help us do our jobs; ICMA has an obligation to discuss these issues.
- Peggy Merriss (City of Pine Lake, GA): ICMA as a professional association is in a unique place to help members look at issues that we have to be uncomfortable with; she has 40 years of experience in the profession; ICMA has a responsibility to prepare members for the discussion of difficult issues, issues that have divided communities; providing members with stories, data and information is an ICMA duty; equity has been a pillar of the profession since the 1930s; so, white papers on issues, statements are important; while she may not agree with everything ICMA takes a position on, ICMA needs make members aware of them; ICMA has a responsibility to help members grow and develop.

2. What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

Report Out from Groups:

- Aishwarya Kumar (City of Decatur, GA): does not feel that ICMA has not lost its way; data and tools are important, but members need more; the Leadership Institute, the Equity Officer Institute, all of these programs are viewed very positively by members. Her group, I-NAPA ,is supporting the ICMA's DEI work.
- Brandon Akworth: being involved with ICMA has helped him grow professionally; commends ICMA for asking the discussion questions on the slide deck; while some of these issues didn't come up in the city where he

was a manager, it did help him be prepared when the conversation does come up.

- Philip Harris (City of North Miami, FL): wants to ensure ICMA continues to foster its DEI work; NFBPA, LGHN and I-NAPA are standing side-by-side with ICMA on this work; important to have these types of discussions. If we are going to dismantle racism, it starts with the heart and gets time to get there. Utilize data to help people get there.
- Sam Gaston (City of Mountain Brook, AL): ICMA does 4 things for members: training, providing best practices, networking and the Code of Ethics. ICMA has been successful because it has been welcoming, non-partisan and non-political. Doesn't believe that ICMA has lost its way. But the Association has, at times, taken a political stand, losing its objectivity. Referred to the glossary of terms and found its publishing troubling.
- Important for ICMA to provide resources to its members. ICMA needs to provide more clarity on DEI; some people only see race but look at female managers because that is not equitable. DEI is important; need to look at all DEI-related areas. Didn't read the glossary of terms, but feels that ICMA should provide information for all members, instead of just one group; would like to hear why members believe ICMA is political or left-leaning.
- Justin Smith, (Assistant to County Manager, Jefferson County President Elect for Alabama) : We don't always get to decide when the issue is politicized. We work in the environment where Elected Officials may take a different position, like the response to the pandemic.
- Jason _____: any statement that ICMA has made so far has represented his view, but not his elected body; said he doesn't leave PM magazine on his office coffee table because ICMA's views run contrary to the views by his city council.
- Jon Lewis (County Administrator, Sarasota Florida) ICMA was born out of the need to promote good governance; interested in hearing what metrics are being used to help measure whether a city is being successful; courageous conversations should be done in smaller groups; ICMA should consider a different format; the ICMA leadership needs to show they're with us, instead of being on a raised platform or dais separated from the audience. There is no group of people in this country, professional managers, who is better equipped to have this discussion. We have to work with all members of our communities. Balance is the key in working with each other.

3. Given ICMA's most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left-leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

Report Out from Groups:

- Tarlesha Smith (City of Fort Lauderdale) Where we stand in this moment, as a woman, black professional, an evangelical Christian, caution over labeling something as political. As part of an oppressed, excluded community, it's a pinch to label the issues as "political". The beauty of the organization is that it chooses to take the moral high road without being imposing. Would be disappointed given what's happening if we didn't step up to treat people fairly and allow people to be included at the table.
- Horace McHugh (FCCMA President) Thanked the leadership for having the conversation. Have we lost our way? No. We reformed our way and have evolved. These are fundamental to good governance in a democracy. Mandate for what ICMA stands for. Helpful for ICMA to develop and share case studies that show what's worked in different communities.
- Tarlesha Smith (City of Fort Lauderdale) Government is a major sector of life. If we are not well versed, if we are not informed on diversity in our communities, may not be doing the best to serve our customers. If you think we don't need to focus on equity, consider that we don't have pay equity for women. Someone said it doesn't touch them. Somewhere in your life you have encountered a woman and as a guy, you need to be focused on this. If you don't want to discuss this, not your best self. Regardless of how you feel personally, we have people in our community who want access to life, liberty, and safety. As a person, you need to recognize the humanity of all.

Written Comments on Notecards:

- "First, ICMA members are political with small p all the time and we are not non-political. Code of Ethics requires us to be non-partisan. Democracy requires us to be political."
- "DEI should not be politically charged, but it is. I think that we need to be sensitive to bringing issues to the forefront. It does DEI disservice to be radical in discussing the issue. It would be better to be more tactical in bringing DEI to the group. Everyone does not come from the same place or background. And whereas ICMA should be apolitical, the members are decidedly political and sometimes let their personal sentiments influence their feelings on DEI. We just need to approach the situation envisioning a line where there are two sets on either side and we should gradually encourage people to get to the middle of the line."
- "We are the best equipped to handle this conversation. Separate how we manage the political conversation, but still talk about both."

- “As a female, I worked to get where I am. I think it hurts females to just push us to get jobs we may not be ready to get if it weren’t filling a checkmark to hire a woman. We are good enough to get jobs on our own – don’t push DEI and other stats – Let us stand on our own.”
- “In addition to technical resources and best practices, continue to provide members with leadership skills necessary to have the difficult community conversations.”
- “ICMA should provide case studies on issues that have happened in different communities. This will help us in how to handle issues in our communities.”
- “No. I do not feel like ICMA should teach DEI to its members – not our role.” Erica Rocker
- “1. ICMA should be involved heavily in potentially decisive societal issues. 2. As a current student, it saddens me to know that ICMA doesn’t want to address societal issues as I thought this was an educational chapter. I believe older members need more education and knowledge about diversity, equity and inclusion, and importance of talking about it.”
- “1. Provide info (accurate) regarding both sides of the issue. Have conversations at Executive level and question members. 2. Have sample answers regarding different scenarios based on best practices. 3. Anything that impacts city government needs to be addressed – good or bad. This is an uncomfortable discussion for a lot of people and most are not saying anything.”
- “Be careful with your definitions. Some are offensive to a large segment of our members. The current proposed definitions for the Code of Ethics on DEI and social justice are acceptable as currently written. Keep ICMA objective and neutral.”
- We can work on DEI and similar issues without hurting the mission of the organization. There are many tools that do not directly help my community but that does not mean ICMA shouldn’t help in those other areas”
- “I believe in DEI but I don’t believe America is “systemically racist.””
- “I don’t believe it’s safe to have a “courageous conversation.”
- “Keep ICMA non-political and non-partisan. Keep CRT and racial history out of ICMA. Unity not division.”
- “We have to work with and serve all members in our community. Working to ensure all voices are included and heard is a core value of our organization. We can help others without hurting others. Balance is the key.”
- “The conversation about DEI seems academic – we need to focus on belongingness. Building belongingness is the best way we can serve.”

- “Agree whole-heartedly with the importance of continued collaboration with partners like NFBPA, Hispanic Network, etc.”
- “Is social justice pro-life?”
- “As the Braver Angels said yesterday, “all of our language is politicized – specifically DEI language. I think polling members about what language they want to use is important. For example, representation and accessible are often better words than diversity and “equity.””
- “2. Provide an a la carte range of tools and resources that leaders from an array of communities can utilize at their discretion.” 3. I agree that ICMA is left-leaning, but that is to be expected and doesn’t bother me. I would say that embracing some issues as a core principle as opposed to part of a toolkit may potentially put members, particularly with conservative communities where leaders may adopt different definitions of politically charged terms, at odds with their elected officials who allow us to participate in ICMA.”

Mountain Plains Regional Conference – Friday, March 11, 2022 – Dallas/Fort Worth Marriott Hotel, Irving, TX:

ICMA President Troy Brown welcomed the approximately 30 attendees and explained that the purpose of the morning’s session was to gain their feedback on a series of questions involving ICMA’s programs and services. He went on to explain the format of the session: those seated at tables in the room would be asked to engage in small group discussions pertaining to a particular question that he asked. Comments could be written on notecards that were provided. President Brown said he would then read aloud what was written on the notecards, followed by a brief report out from each group.

The following is the feedback from each of the questions that were posed to attendees:

- 1. What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive societal issues?**

Report Out from Groups:

One group said they recognize that there is a variety of opinions on issues, and ICMA should provide information on all of them. There was discussion that ICMA is moving away from a professional development organization to one becoming focused on policy formulation. Some acknowledged that ICMA’s position on issues has divided the membership. There’s also the feeling that ICMA wants to program the membership, that’s there’s an ICMA agenda behind it all.

Another group also felt that ICMA should do better to provide information on timely social issues. Because members represent a lot of different communities, it's important to know what works in one community, doesn't always work in others.

Written Comments on Notecards:

- As leaders, we often face tough decisions. As residents, people look to us for guidance. Agreeable silence is as loud and resonates just as profoundly as “a code of silence.” It undermines the essence of leadership.
- I believe ICMA needs to stand up for what is just and right and know that all issues are not partisan, even if they get labeled.
- To have much more confidence than I presently have that ICMA is really listening to its members. It is clear that ICMA listens too much to select voices and staff decides what to do, announces the decision, proceeds to implementation, and only gives “lip service” to members’ thoughts.
- ICMA needs to be more active in growing the profession, promoting the profession. We don’t need a statement on Ukraine, we need tools and resources to help manage our communities and more professional development opportunities.
- How is Kenneth Williams allowed to serve on the board when he is no longer a manager? He retired! There needs to be a statement.
- If the message is always directly tied to the ICMA tenets, mission, and values then I think it is appropriate.
- Dignity, respect, human rights. We have an obligation to leave communities better and more equitable than when we started. Organization members are seen as needing to take leadership roles in their communities and/or society.
- Silence can be seen as complicit with others who disagree with you, or taking the side of the “oppressor.”
- At the very least, ICMA should provide scientific and thoughtful information on all sides so individuals can address different views in their community. Education for city managers who have limited knowledge/views of issues.
- Provide resources and guidelines on emerging issues.
- Provide resources and tolls to the membership.
- Helpful to have resources to understand and speak to DEI issues.
- It makes sense for ICMA to make statements/positions regarding values/topics related to services our members provide and our areas of responsibility.
- When there is a direct connection to members, it makes sense for ICMA to provide a statement on the issues.

- Policy vs. Management – be careful not to get too far out. There is a fine line between informing vs. “programming” members.
- ICMA should not shy away from hard human issues just because some may brand as partisan.
- Members don’t need statements. We need ICMA to provide information for decisions to help members support local government leaders. There should be no political tone in response, and a response is only appropriate if the societal issue impacts the profession – refer to the Code of Ethics, in particular Tenets 5 and 6.
- Provide information on the issue, explain how the issue emerged, provide information on both sides, support solutions.

2. What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

Verbal Report Out from Groups:

One table reported that they talked about what was just and right. They talked about whether it was appropriate for ICMA to issue a statement when something is treated wrong, and the answer was no. However, as leaders leading a group or entity, they are sought for their guidance. When leaders are facing something that is affecting a majority of the community, whether it is right or wrong, the community may agree or disagree with the action that was taken, yet it still affects the entire community. At that point, there is a need to address it in some form or fashion. So, does every situation deserve a platform, the answer is no. But when there is an issue that impacts the marginalized, that is when leaders are required to stand up on behalf of those who can’t stand up for themselves. And if leaders can’t stand up, they shouldn’t be in a leadership position.

Another group reported that ICMA’s role should be as a convener, facilitating conversations and being a central point to have these conversations. That ICMA should leverage technology to get more experts to engage with members in ways beyond having to attend formal conferences, which requires travel. That ICMA should conduct outreach to members about what is valuable for them in webinars and learning opportunities. That ICMA should play a strong role in providing resources for small communities. And that the main role of ICMA is ethics and that should be the focus.

The digital economy was discussed at another table. Basically, what does the future look like, especially on emerging issues involving cryptocurrency because GFOA and others are already looking into this, and the impact it may have on local governments.

Written Comments on Notecards:

- Provide a resource library where members can look up information on issues affecting their job role/cities.
- Provide a safe place for members to have a sounding board, be vulnerable.
- Contact info for other cities facing certain issues (e.g. “this is what’s going on in ..., for more information, contact _____)
- ICMA is doing it right now – being a convener, discussion starter, resource center, etc.
- Maybe surveys/outreach to find out what members want or need?
- Provide information on the issues and suggest how to frame and address the issue, e.g. how to have the conversation in the community and/or within the government organization.
- Make connections to other members who are addressing the same issues.
- Establishing open communication and a platform to discuss. Panels, online forums, conferences, webinars, etc. with greater number and frequency than currently offered.
- Provide resources, information, and tools online, in PM, and at conferences on topics such as infrastructure, community engagement, economic development, changing work and commuting patterns, council relations, DEI, policing, divisive issues.
- Members need to pay attention to what is going on. We need video education for professional development sessions. Need more resources on homelessness.
- Provide forums in groups by demographics on topics that are relevant events. Small vs. large cities and counties is an example. Some situations might not be relevant based on demographics or topics.
- Find ways to get more experts and discussions to the membership (can leverage technology (e.g. Zoom, Teams, etc.). This allows engagement without an in-person conference.
- Which challenges? Police safety vs. police violence, engagement, social justice, racism? Who gets the stage? Information and connections to people who are involved and knowledgeable.

3. Given ICMA’s most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left-leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

Verbal Report Out from Groups:

One group discussed that you shouldn’t be reactionary, that the roll out is important.

Other comments included: That ICMA stands too aggressively, suggesting the comment that silence is complicity. That the conversation on DEI should have been taking place all along, prior to 2020, and that 2020 was a bit of an overcorrection, and

there is now a fear that things will revert back to 2019 and people won't be talking about this important topic at all. That the left-leaning issue is not accurate. And finally, DEI should be viewed through a management perspective, not a policy perspective.

Another table discussed the history of ICMA, talking about its formation in the 1920s, and wanting to know if it was true that only white men could join as members. There was a comment that the demographics of the membership have been changing in recent years, with more people of color joining as members, which is certainly occurring in some areas but not others. While ICMA has been changing, so should the discussion of DEI, one that is more vocal than silent because silence can be just as loud of an opinion when something is wrong, then protesting.

Still another group reported that working in representative government means a commitment to serve all segments of a community. It's not about having perfect DEI programs, but about having DEI programs that are custom-fit to individual communities to make them better. That said, it's ICMA's role to help members do the job better.

An individual said he doesn't believe ICMA has lost its way. As a 23-year member, he feels there's been a progression in the separation between the membership and organization itself. He said he doesn't feel that ICMA has lost its way, but how can the organization better connect with its membership, and regional conferences like the one in Irving is an opportunity to do just that.

Another individual (who identified himself as James Fisher), said that he was one of several managers who met with President Brown and others this past November in Washington, DC to discuss several concerns they had about where ICMA was going. What resulted from that meeting was a document called, "Courageous Conversations," which talked about having these kinds of strong conversations, but also the willingness to listen to all points of view. He went on to say that it was agreed labels would be avoided. However, the question that's now being discussed gets into labels, like the use of the words left-leaning. He said he doesn't believe ICMA has lost its way, but questioned whether the Association is in the middle of a dense fog. He believes it is. It's going to take the willingness of everyone to sit down, listen and understand. Not just to listen and respond, but listen to understand. At his table, he found a variety of viewpoints expressed, and that everyone comes from different life experiences, it's not just a one group, one culture, one issue, one race sort of thing. ICMA needs to take time, sit down and have the courageous conversation with its members. He also feels the Code of Ethics doesn't need to be tweaked. The asking of the question, "Is the Code of Ethics biased?" has shifted the conversation to something being wrong with the

code. The challenge is that some members in the room come from communities where the big issues of society are not a problem, but others where it's ten times more.

Another individual – who also was part of the group that met with President Brown in Washington, DC – said that it was a good discussion. He said that during that meeting, he listened more than talked and reflected about it. He told those new to the profession, or at their first ICMA activity, not to be freaked out about the conversation that was going on this morning. He encouraged members to get engaged and to speak up.

Written Comments on Notecards:

- It's appropriate if it's related to the profession. Members need resources to help create a local government workforce that reflects the community. Be mindful of word choices/lexicology – words matter.
- Silence is a statement too.
- DEI isn't partisan, but proceed with caution.
- Human rights have always been politicized. Any topic can be political. Where a person stands on an issue itself can be seen as political and partisan. ICMA should be value based more than political.
- ICMA should provide the whole story, communicated thoroughly when making statements.
- Push through tough conversations. People may call touch conversations political to avoid talking about it.
- Do a better job of letting those who are being impacted be heard most.
- Absolutely disagree. These conversations are important to community building. DEI work as a portion of the ICMA work plan to share resources and expertise to promote.
- Disagree – this is a real issue that needs to be talked about because it impacts our cities.
- Equity and racism is not political. It is someone's life we are talking about.
- A very small percentage of what ICMA does is around equity. It's those who don't agree that label it as left leaning.
- Disagree. It is what is right and just to promote and support a significant portion of our community. Civil rights should not be political. We need to leave the world/community a more just place.
- Disagree. Our work is about inclusion and creating space for all citizens.
- There's a big difference between being political and being partisan. One can engage appropriately on political issues without being partisan.
- When faced with the criticism, explore the why and how issues.
- Disagree with the idea that ICMA has lost its way.

West Coast Regional Conference – Friday, March 17, 2022 – Skamania Lodge, Stevenson, WA:

ICMA President Troy Brown welcomed the approximately 45 attendees and explained that the purpose of the morning's session was to gain their feedback on a series of questions involving ICMA's programs and services. He emphasized the importance of membership engagement especially during the pandemic since members have not been able to convene in-person.

He provided some background on the history of DEI work from ICMA and explained today is an opportunity to hear from the members and get their input on how ICMA can continue to meet their needs.

He went on to explain the format of the session: those seated at tables in the room would be asked to engage in small group discussions pertaining to a particular question that he asked. Comments could be written on notecards that were provided. President Brown said he would then read aloud what was written on the notecards, followed by a brief discussion.

Also present were Executive Board members Jeff Towery, Peter Troedsson, Pam Antil.

The following is the feedback from each of the questions that were posed to attendees:

1. What do you want/need from ICMA when it comes to DEI Issues?

- Database of cities that have worked on similar difficult issues that a city confronting an issue can utilize. ICMA should be a one stop shop for who has worked on what. We are dealing with a lot of hard issues and it would be nice to not have to spend so much time tracking down who has also done it.
- Continue providing resources and education, with an emphasis on opportunities for managers to have productive conversations with each other.
- Help with apolitical messaging that is not divisive.
- Tools for dealing with divisive issues without being polarizing.
- Keep working on tools and best practices.
- Hotline for members in difficult situations, possibly add to the mentor network.
- Member stories that help build the business case.
- Toolkit including questions to use when engaging the community and best practices.
- Set the stage/provide a framework for collaboration among managers, information sharing, forums, host regional conversations.
- Case studies would be helpful, as well as a do/don't list of what worked/didn't work in crisis situations.

- Continue to strengthen our professional network so we can share information and build common practice.
- A range of talking points that recognize not all communities even want to talk about DEI.
- Tools on how to talk to city council members when they take on DEI and one or more of their members aren't supportive.
- De-escalation training at ICMA Conference, possibly as a pre-conference workshop.
- Tools for productive discussions on complex issues.

2. What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive societal issues?

Verbal Report Out from Groups:

ICMA's response to the murder of George Floyd was correct because it supported the police force and spoke to the emotions of the people at the time. ICMA did not shy away from the issue society was facing and responded quickly. As leaders we need to know how to confront the issues of the day. I think ICMA got it right.

It is important to distinguish between politics and partisanship. Politics is about the allocation of resources. We should not duck politically challenging issues, but we need to avoid partisanship.

"Help us understand how to face these politically charged issues."

ICMA should provide responses as a thought leader but make it resource-driven for the members. Provide more of "the how".

Despite how we might feel personally, if ICMA takes a stand on an issue then council members may respond negatively and that could affect our jobs and work, e.g., not pay for us to go to an ICMA conference.

"We are not political, but we swim within political waters all the time. We work for politicians."

Written Comments on Notecards:

- Promotion of good leadership and management. ICMA should be careful about straying too far.
- Don't think we should be the leaders of the conversation.
- Sometimes we get too caught up in neutrality.

- George Floyd is/was a policing issue – race was central to the incident. Staff have to better reflect the communities we serve.
- Model what we hope our members will do in their communities.
- Explain the issue and provide information and resources.
- ICMA leadership must keep in mind the dynamics of smaller communities. The messages that may work in metro areas likely will be out of context in rural areas.
- ICMA must model behavior we expect from our communities. Acknowledge a sense of urgency, but take time to develop consensus.
- Facilitate conversations and provide resources.
- Provide resources for professional managers to be a resource for communities to move forward regardless of the position. ICMA must represent the professional, non-political profession that each community needs professional management – that is our founding principle.
- Rather than focus on all that is wrong, lead on where we have come from, where there is agreement, and build from there.
- We should push the conversations without necessarily taking sides.
- I don't see how ICMA could back away from this work. We need to recognize that many of our members must address DEI, whether ICMA does or not. But if we back away from the issue of our age, ICMA is abdicating its position as the premier resource for guidance and best practices. I don't believe it is a "left playbook" when the alternative is to simply act like there isn't a problem. There is, and we can either address it proactively or become irrelevant in this space, as our members will find the resources they need whether it's through ICMA or not.
- ICMA should respond from the local government professional perspective and avoid partisan statements.
- The definition of political is defined by our elected officials. If ICMA gets too involved, our councils won't support ICMA.
- All of a sudden, we're in it. It is better to focus on best practices to handle vs. issuing a statement.
- ICMA needs to frame a public response. Provide member support – incidents like the murder of George Floyd affect members differently. Add ethical guidance as needed. Engage members in discussions to develop best practices. Remember that not taking a stand will be seen as disconnected.
- Don't lose sight of local concerns. Provide factual information to elected officials and ICMA members.
- Identify stakeholders and their concerns and summarize their comments for the general public and the membership.

- Stay politically neutral. Remind members of their role in leading their staff. Avoid polarization.
- As an organization where members should not play an active role in politics, I feel ICMA should also not play a role.
- Understand long-term implications of issues and statements. ICMA taking a stand can give managers support to act.
- ICMA should play a leadership role. To ignore big societal issues would be tone deaf and strange from my point of view.
- ICMA should be thoughtful and judicious in its responses and should not be pressured into making a statement before facts are known and objective analysis has been undertaken.
- We shouldn't be getting involved in political issues – I am fearful that this will alienate the membership and possibly break apart the organization.
- Facilitate the conversation and provide tools to the manager to convene both sides in a meaningful way.

3. What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

Verbal Report Out from Groups:

Not all communities are the same and it is very difficult to have a one-size-fits-all solution. What we need are talking points about these issues even when our community doesn't want to talk about them. DEI and other issues may not be a priority for council members or mayors, but there are members in the community who want to talk about DEI or other issues that can become political.

DEI is not just one focus area; it covers multiple areas. We need tools and resources that help us in multiple topic areas. The PM Ethics issue with definitions was helpful. We need tools that help us address the underlying issues that impact DEI. For example, resources on addressing homelessness can improve DEI by addressing an underlying issue in the community. There is a bigger depth to DEI than what we see ICMA doing.

"DEI is not just one thing. It is many things."

One group asked if ICMA need to process all of this information as the DEI expert or if ICMA instead provide a list of experts or referrals and list resources for members to contact. Case studies on DEI issues would be helpful.

In response, another member commented that small organizations/communities do not have resources to seek experts. ICMA provides a basis and foundation for a small, rural community that doesn't get a lot of funding. Resources from ICMA are helpful.

The levels of resources and access to them needs to be variable in order to meet the needs of each type of community.

*“This is a delicate and sensitive issue. Facilitation skills are what we need to have that professional development in order to navigate political waters and not drown.”
Managers often find themselves in the middle of these difficult conversations and we need to have the skills on how to communicate.*

Written Comments on Notecards:

- ICMA should provide tools for community engagement on divisive issues.
- Present ways for members and communities to work through challenging issues – opportunities to educate about form of government or the role of the manager.
- Connect cities that are responding to similar local situations. Anchor city managers to push back against ethical professional standards. “I’m sorry, that goes against the equity standards and values put forth by ICMA.”
- Highlight best practices of managing and addressing the issue. Provide thought leadership, research, theory and practice.
- Be a facilitator of conversations and a resource for important information to help managers facilitate conversations locally.
- Don’t lose the focus on other major challenges, like homelessness, wildfires, policing, which affect historically disadvantaged populations.
- Provide resources to assist in best practices and convening for problem solving. Need to have broad focus on different challenges.

4. **Given ICMA’s most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?**

Verbal Report Out from Groups:

One member asked, “When you think of DEI, do you think of it as a race issue? Or is it about affordable housing? Poverty? Gender? Socioeconomic issues? I still don’t understand what ICMA thinks DEI is.”

“Definitions do matter.”

A member commented that he feels like he has “strikes against” him: “I’m a white man, I’m from the South and I served 39 years in the military. I worked hard since I was 13, I was beaten, I did a lot, and I’ve spent my whole life trying to raise people up. There are people with certain backgrounds that need raising up and they are sharp people, but they just didn’t have the background or skills. There are segments of our population

that need help. We need to promote the best people and make the effort for people who, on the surface, may not seem like the best. ICMA needs to help us on how to recognize talent and how to raise people up. It's our jobs as leaders ... I got a little offended about the definitions like 'white fragility' and 'white privilege' in the latest issue of PM magazine, but I got over it... My mayor wanted me to resign from ICMA and I talked him down from that."

In response, a member stated: "When I read the article on definitions in PM magazine I thought it was interesting. I have a daughter who came to me and identified as pansexual, and I didn't know what that meant. I thought the article helped me to understand it. I don't understand why someone would feel that reading the article "feels like a strike against them". President Brown summarized for the group that this member found the definitions article as useful to her life situation she encountered.

On the topic of facilitation skills, one member shared "So many people feel like they have left behind... And there are so many levels to the identities that we hold. In order to facilitate well, we need to recognize that this system we live and work in doesn't just affect one group in one certain way. We need to recognize that blue collar workers in a rural setting might experience similar scenarios as disenfranchised urbanites. We need to try to understand-- from each person's perspective-- what it is that they have faced in their lives.

"I forced myself to read some books that were uncomfortable for me (How to Be an Anti-Racist, etc.) and under the context those books provided, I could see what some of these terms mean and I can accept it and not internalize it or take it personally.... It is hard to get to the next step--which is solutions."

"The first part of this is education. ICMA has forced me to take that deep dive. This job is about continual learning and to keep going."

"I never viewed ICMA as telling me what to do, but I always interpreted as ICMA as giving me tools or offering to teach me. You cannot force me to learn but if ICMA shares something from experts and I want to learn about it then I can. There are some issues that will speak to the core values of the profession or association, and this is one of them." President Brown summarized the member's statement as: "Take what you need from ICMA and leave the rest behind."

Written Comments on Notecards:

- Disagree. I don't think that of ICMA, but I very much see how this could be seen as left leaning. I think that is wrong, and that we are caught up in

bigger societal trends. ICMA could be seen as right leaning if it stayed totally mute on this issue, too.

- Disagree. If all people are equal then it is our job to ensure that is upheld. We have to each out to the voices who aren't the loudest.
- Disagree, but ICMA needs to remain open to all perspectives and share multiple solutions or opinions on these issues.
- What is ICMA's goal? Is it to retain members? Answering this question will help inform how ICMA approaches these issues.
- Personally, I thought the article on definitions was the best article I've ever seen in the ICMA magazine. These practical articles are what we need more of.
- Provided that ICMA's DEI work is centered and interwoven with core issues such as trust in government, inclusive community engagement, excellence in policing, and health impacts of transportation projects – then you are on the right path and haven't lost your way.
- ICMA has gone too far with this and has polarized a large segment of its members. The recent article on definitions is an excellent example. We get it already!!
- No, but this discussion does hit on the question of whether our job is just to “operate” the system of government or to reform the system to work better for everyone.
- ICMA needs to refocus the conversation from political spin (Rachel Maddow and Sean Hannity) and elevate the conversation to discuss values. Our organization needs to adapt to the society that is changing rapidly to be relevant.
- The key is to elevate the conversation i.e. frame the issue, engage changing communities. If we don't lean in to these issues, we risk irrelevancy of the profession and our communities.
- Agree – too much. Our focus should be on operations – water, sewer, etc. Not always easy, but recognize there is a conversation to be had.
- Agree, and if we disagree with the approach, then we are in violation of the Code of Ethics.
- Somewhat agree. The concepts of DEI should be in all we do. What we do, our primary mission, is to provide municipal services. DEI focuses should be how we assure services are provided in a way that supports these principles.
- Agree – taking too much space for this. Communities need different things and this approach seems too race based. What is the board focused on?
- 83 definitions of equity doesn't help us. We need to be careful re: how we define things.

- I'm new enough that I don't know if ICMA has "lost its way." For what it's worth, I'm fine with DEI efforts as long as they're thoughtful – and that any policy changes/recommendations are made with an eye toward the prevention of unintended consequences. The easiest answers are seldom the best.
- Disagree. Every community is different but some need the learning that has been taken.
- Agree. ICMA needs to stay in focus of what is best for the entire membership. If left leaning means pro-community, that is a good thing. ICMA must stay out of what happens inside "the Beltway" unless that brings needed resources to communities.
- Equity and inclusion work typically lives on the left leaning side of politics. If we want to make government and outcomes more equitable, the work starts with us and at the top. Equity should be valued by both sides of the political spectrum. ICMA needs to change with the times.
- Not an easy answer. Recognize the other voices in the room. Not everyone is on board. It could be at our peril if others feel their opinion doesn't matter, then they will not participate.

5. **Are there areas of ICMA's DEI work that should receive more emphasis or less emphasis?**

Verbal Report Out from Groups:

"We talked a lot about equity, and I thought we should have a separate conversation about equity instead of equity always being a part of DEI. We should reframe the issue. For example, inequities in infrastructure or displacement or raising people up seem like separate equity issues that need to be pulled out from DEI that can actually address DEI." The group offer an example for comparison: Homelessness is not a single problem; it is a symptom of many problems. If you try to attack it as a single issue you will fail. DEI is the same.

Sometimes, if we lead with diversity, it can seem like we are pulling people apart and putting people into different buckets when we are really trying to help everyone.

Written Comments on Notecards:

- Recognize the other voices. Has there been another issue similar that ICMA has weighed in on? How was it handled?
- More emphasis: Continue to diversify the membership and create leadership opportunities for newer members. We need to be more diverse and equitable as a profession.
- Continue the work to update the Code of Ethics.

- Try to move beyond the idea of a zero-sum game. Elevating some does not require diminishing others.
- Educate members on DEI in terms of mentoring. How do we raise people up who don't have the background but obviously have the potential?
- One of the issues I haven't seen much anywhere is anti-displacement. With ARPA, many of our members are set to make historic investments in our communities and that can lead to gentrification/displacement of our most vulnerable populations.
- DEI needs to be integrated into all tools and resources, such as an equity lens.
- Focus on diversity to increase awareness in and for the communities that we serve. Again, ICMA needs to balance how to set the dialogue while at the same time providing assistance on the workings of government.
- How do we evaluate our internal processes from an equity lens? Hiring, procurement, insurance minimums for vendors, etc. are less controversial than police reform.
- More: tools for different size communities (e.g. small/rural, medium, large metro).
- More: addressing issues when city council members don't want to take it on (e.g. Juneteenth celebration).
- More: case studies, resources on socio-economic assistance. The divide between haves and have nots is getting bigger.
- Integrate into the daily actions – how are we doing the work that touches all lives – more positive examples of impacts – avoiding words that become political. Focus less on definitions, terms, etc. and more on how communities are doing – involving impacting all members of the community.
- Challenges range well beyond the typical DEI discussion. ICMA has not been a resource for our community on homelessness, infrastructure funding, climate readiness, and these challenges have direct impact on helping all citizens in the community.

[Midwest Regional Conference – Friday, March 24, 2022 – Hilton St. Louis at the Ballpark, St. Louis, MO:](#)

The following is the feedback from each of the questions that were posed to attendees:

- 1. What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive social issues?**
 - ICMA can issue a statement but need to remain apolitical. Members are supposed to be nonpartisan and so should ICMA

- React to underlying cause rather than the incident. Focus on service delivery to prevent the issue.
- Take a leadership position. Don't remain silent. This shows that the organization is about more than networking, about a higher calling.
- Encourage member engagement on challenging issues.
- Collaborate with similar partners.
- Maybe an advocacy role e.g. form of government.
- The community I serve faced a very serious policing issue at the time of the George Floyd murder. An officer had shot 3 people of color in 5 years of service. ICMA's statement helped to raise important discussions with our community and council.
- ICMA should first engage in thoughtful discussion with members in the cities involved.
- Keep leading. Provide resources.
- Identify the structural parameters of how a local government could respond (not should respond – but structural solutions within what is statutorily available as a solution, not really to push the government body into a social responding unless they vote in that direction)
- Where is Marc Ott? Why isn't he attending Regional Conferences?

2. What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- Outreach, engagement, training
- Partner with MPO's, COG's – especially re: training programs
- Provide transition and onboarding tool – what happens when you take over in a city where there was just one manager for many years or never had a manager? When I leave a community, I leave a significant summary identifying recent successes, challenges, technical limitations, staff profiles, analyses of historic challenges and personality tendencies of city council, as well as the names and contacts of local managers and ICMA members who can be a resource.
- For new members, there need to be guides/mentors to show us the way.
- Provide support networks with colleagues
- Provide research on best practices.
- A web-based resource connecting members who have dealt with challenging issues – big, unusual issues/occurrences.
- Solutions and programs are scalable but need to provide solutions that give small communities the tools to implement the solutions (small is less than 20,000, not 50,000 by ICMA standards).
- If facing a critical incident reaching national news, ICMA should facilitate experienced managers to reach out and be a sounding board related to crisis management.

- “Go packs” for best practices by subject and category.
- Finding quality training is very difficult. ICMA should be a resource for DEI training not just for managers and assistants but also for our staff.
- Offer training (or tools) that are relative to the community that members serve in. There is no one size fits all approach. Must be adaptable and impactful providing appropriate tools and resources.
- Advertise ICMA’s programs and services.

3. Given ICMA’s most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left-leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

- Disagree. ICMA needs to bring these issues out of the red vs. blue discussion and make/show how these issues impact everyone.
- Yes, but only because ICMA is being driven by incidents rather than a deliberate attempt to be political.
- Prefer that ICMA take a leadership role in these issues.
- Disagree, but I think that a clear definition for what is successful DEI and what is partisanship really?
- Disagree. DEI should not be framed as a political view.
- I’ve always appreciated ICMA’s thought leadership on difficult topics. How many members are challenging ICMA’s approach?
- On the surface, no. DEI should be afforded to everyone – below the surface it is very political unfortunately. DEI is about all members and all people we serve. That includes people from all walks, not just one. How do we serve all people – those who are disadvantaged, those who don’t have the same opportunities/aren’t from one race but are from all walks. (i.e. socioeconomically challenged, LGBTQ+, mental illness, physical limitations).
- Lost? There are 2 areas of emphasis that ICMA needs to concentrate on: 1. DEI in the profession/staffing; 2. DEI issues within the community that can weaken a community (e.g. housing, public safety representation, access to services).
- Could ICMA present DEI as a matter of operations as opposed to overarching red vs. blue?

4. Are there areas in ICMA’s DEI work that should receive more emphasis or less emphasis?

- Be deliberative in selecting keynotes. Be sensitive to how controversial or provocative they might be.
- Focus more on equity and inclusion

- Recognize members represent a broad political spectrum and work to address varied perspectives.
- Explain how DEI relates to local government profession and why it's important. Provide testimonials from managers on how ICMA's DEI work has helped them.
- Build out more training opportunities.
- I don't think ICMA is doing anything wrong with DEI work.
- I think ICMA should continue to build training and do more.
- It should include: all people, all walks, not just one focus. We are here to serve all of the people in our communities

[Northeast Regional Conference – Friday, April 8, 2022 – The Colonnade Hotel, Boston, MA:](#)

The following is the feedback from each of the questions that were posed to attendees:

1. What do you want and need from ICMA?

- Resource center for policy, best practices.
- Professional development and networking. External recognition outside the profession for what managers and municipalities do.
- Onboarding materials for new council members.
- Different engagement opportunities (new/mid/late in life).
- Financial support to host municipality for fellows.
- Scholarships – local governance/regional.
- More diversity in panelists.
- Work at it all the time, not just checking the box and saying we're done.
- Has ICMA ever considered council-manager training for our electeds?
- Demystify the lingo.
- Terms published in PM recently were helpful. Are there terms that avoid polarizing?
- Resources on how to talk to the community, elected officials, and employees (three different approaches).
- How do we talk to the people who aren't on the same page?
- Tools & tips for elected officials.
- Clarity about what our ethical obligation is to serve the entire community. Is the goal to passively "remove barriers" or implement active equity practice?
- ICMA can help facilitate this discussion for many communities; make sure we are not just checking the box.
- I think we should all a tenet or two about DEI rather than trying to add it to established tenets.

- Start recruiting kids at younger ages. This profession is going through a huge transition which is also a great opportunity to diversify the membership.
- Helping individuals understand the social challenges in our community.
- Technical information, examples to bring back home.
- Balance DEI with other issues.
- Tools to do your job well.
- Political neutrality does not mean silence on important issues, particularly issues of conscience, morality, and ethics.
- More professional development for the deputy/assistant level practitioner.
- Can ICMA do more to help the development of the next generation of managers by partnering with colleges and universities?
- Member repository of sample documents (e.g. resolutions, RFPs, common policies, bid specs) by state, region, topic, type.
- Consultant directory.
- Member engagement, focus on fundamentals, leadership by example.
- A toolbox on engaging the BIPOC community.
- Promote what members are doing, especially on social media.
- How to be nonpartisan/apolitical on DEI.

2. What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive societal issues?

- Offer both sides of an issue for the manager to help educate the community and let the community debate the pros and cons to help reach a consensus.
- ICMA needs to focus on DEI policy issues to support local managers on an operational basis. We had a hard time answering this.
- Focusing on the role of local government – on topic and on brand.
- Facilitate discussions based on factual data – avoid false narratives.
- Consistent, factual, vocal, benchmark for information on the issues.
- Develop “hot sheet” to post with facts – one page PDF – with ICMA logo for visibility.
- Training and resources on facilitating community conversations.
- Help build civic infrastructure.
- ICMA should not be afraid to provide thought leadership on divisive issues that relate to communities.
- Look for the greatest common denominator of how to clarify and uphold our ethical obligation to ensure broad, diverse representation and share our tenets/ practices with managers, elected officials and the public.
- ICMA should take a stand when the issue clearly affects communities (e.g. social justice, racism, environmental justice). I realize making the

determination is next to impossible. For example, ICMA may not want to take a stance on abortion.

- Concerned that if ICMA takes too political of a stance, elected officials will not be supportive of continuing ICMA membership.
- Issue through 2 lenses: 1. Is the issue supported by the Code of Ethics; 2. Does the issue encourage or discourage citizens from having a love relationship with the community.
- Connect it to local government – if it can rightfully be connected. If not, maybe leave it alone.
- Create opportunities for better understanding of other points of view.
- Statements consistent with the Code of Ethics and core beliefs are okay.
- Relate to the work we do.
- Don't be afraid to say something when it needs to be said.
- Maintain a focus on the big picture.
- ICMA should just be an information provider. Remain neutral – no position on divisive issues.
- How do we communicate when our community is in its own echo chamber?
- ICMA should stay focused on the issues regardless of how divisive they are.

3. What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- Help provide resources for us to turn to if needed. Little role in the actual issue.
- Quality professional development for members at all levels, not just managers.
- Keep in-person training programs as much as possible.
- Free Dunkin' donuts and beer/wine at all events.
- Provide the best resources possible.
- For important priority issues – provide training outside the usual business model (e.g. at lower cost).
- ICMA should provide a survey software tool to allow local surveys, citizen engagement. Survey small, medium, large towns for ICMA to identify the issues facing communities.
- Consultation services and providing information (which ICMA is doing well)
- ICMA's website gets **zero stars**. Information is not easy to find when we need. It is also hard to change personal info.
- Seek out and publish case studies from members – focus on practical approaches.
- Connect to members that have experience addressing acute community issues.

- Lessons learned, including challenges, failures, etc.
- Encourage members to identify issues, challenges, areas of experience on professional profile – a way to connect with other members on topics of interest (experience, not necessarily expertise).
- Clarify the expectations for and value of ICMA membership to the community so they understand that ICMA members have ethics, an oath, and standard practices, all of which are available online for anyone to see (like Realtor.com).
- Provide resources, best practices, case studies, toolkits, and educational opportunities. Be the voice when members are restrained or unable.
- Ensure MissionSquare continues to pay ICMA well for naming rights!
- Focus on developing a toolkit to help define the process on difficult issues to encourage community conversation.
- What to do when a Board changes direction and the manager finds they can no longer implement those decisions because they go against our ethical obligations.
- Have more opportunities for in-person dialogue and conversation with managers instead of in a virtual environment.
- Expert speakers via remote meeting participation or online videos on hot topics (e.g. housing, inclusion, active listening, bring another manager in to speak, DEI network experts).
- Repository of lessons learned and after-action reports.
- Engage with state municipal associations to press elected officials and insurance companies to value ICMA's Code of Ethics. It needs to start mattering more to them, not just to us.
- Community certification for professionally run – could we approach insurance companies? (e.g. a well-run fire department can improve your community's FCC #)
- Tie an understanding of professional management to community's liability insurance to help elected officials understand the stakes.
- ICMA should serve as a resource for information, FAQ's, and training so that the manager can be advised, lead, and respond in a meaningful way for their community.

[Illinois City/County Management Association – Winter Conference – March 29-31, 2022:](#)

See attached spreadsheet for a summary of responses from ILCMA conference attendees. This session was facilitated by Midwest Regional Vice President Molly

Mehner and Midwest Regional Director Cheryl Hilvert.

[Arkansas City Management Association Winter Conference – April 21-22, 2022:](#)

This session was facilitated by Mountain Plains Regional Director Karen Daly. The following is the feedback from each of the questions that were posed to attendees:

1. What do you want/need from ICMA?

- For Credentialed Managers – need more training at Annual Conference and in states/regions to meet credentialing requirements. Requirements should be totally self-reporting.
- Not happy with the ICMA districting (regions) – keep Arkansas with Texas and Oklahoma.
- Not very happy with the current training offered by ICMA (nonexistent). Change in training was not communicated.
- ICMA needs to develop updated crisis management training.

2. What should the Role of ICMA be on Divisive Issues?

- Provide toolkits to city managers re: divisive societal issues.
- ICMA should encourage civility and educate ICMA members on how to bring civility to their boards.
- ICMA needs to address, and help its members address, equity and inclusion from a civility standpoint.

3. What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- ICMA needs to develop updated crisis management training.

4. Given ICMA's most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

- ICMA should represent everyone but walk a tightrope and don't become a lightning rod.
- We agree that DEI may be too political in some people's judgment. It is an important issue.

[Utah City/County Management Association Spring Conference – April 19, 2022](#)

This session was facilitated by Mountain Plains Regional Vice President Diane Stoddard and Mountain Plains Regional Director Karen Daly. The following is the feedback from each of the questions that were posed to attendees:

1. What do you want/need from ICMA?

- Provide a national/horizon perspective
- Ways to share best practices.
- Benchmarking for newer cities.
- Fundamentals of city management.
- Promote professional management
- More and affordable training for aspiring managers.
- More organizational assessment tools – broader scope
- National salary/position database
- Case studies/best practices, contracts/legal, ideas on employee benefits.
- Resources for newcomers to the profession.
- I would like to see more effective defense and promotion of the form of government.
- More affordable trainings for smaller budgets.
- Better conference locations. (Portland was a poor location for providing municipal management examples).
- More field studies – learning in the field.
- More sessions in smaller groups, not by salesmen.
- Member delivered, member-oriented topics at conference.
- Training opportunities.
- National benchmarking information.
- Dues are too pricey.
- Opportunities for technical training.
- Bring back map function on Job Board.
- Need more resources specific to smaller communities.
- Share research more readily with members.
- Provide more policy templates.
- Career Compass is very helpful.
- Appreciate standard manager contract template. Other forms would be appreciated.
- Needs to be more affordable (membership, trainings, events).
- Be careful not to spread marketing too broadly to adjacent professionals.
- UCMA (state association) fills most of our needs/desires.
- More information about graduate student recruitment programs.
- We need more influence at graduate schools across the country regarding applying for professional positions.
- Best practices.

- Quality research.
- Training material.
- Timely information.
- Reduce/eliminate sponsor-driven breakout sessions at Conference.
- Enrich Conference sessions with member panels.
- For Students: more national support for chapters, particularly for events; better access to \$ for conference attendance for undergraduates; more student chapter events/conferences/etc. hosted by ICMA.
- Connect more groups together like APA, GFOA.
- The ICMA Credentialing system has become too commercial. It seems to be more about selling conferences and training schools.
- Ethics structure and training.
- Updated dues structure.
- Engagement in local profession promotion.
- Job board.
- Leadership.
- More manager-written articles, not consultants.
- Professional development, networking opportunities.
- Information on national issues and trends.
- There is too much communication from ICMA.
- There is now a cost to many programs that used to be free.
- More focus on rural communities, not just large communities. Rural is not 50,000 or less. It should be more like 10,000 or 5,000.

2. What should the Role of ICMA be on Divisive Issues?

- ICMA is a professional organization. Its efforts should be to train managers to help our elected officials navigate societal issues, not to take positions on those issues. It is inappropriate for ICMA to advocate political/societal positions.
- It is not ICMA's role to fix societal issues.
- Not ICMA's role. Each city needs to address these issues on a case by case basis so ICMA should stay neutral.
- ICMA should provide facts and a forum to discuss views.
- On societal/divisive issues, more practical advice for dealing with issues affecting unrest, employment, etc. as opposed to policy discussions focused on right/wrong, good/bad, problematic judgmental examinations.
- ICMA does not need to speak out on everything. ICMA represents a broad range of cities, counties, and countries best by staying focused on who it represents. Be consistent. Recognize bad actors and speak against bad, without forgetting the city/county perspective.

- Keep focus on local issues, not nationwide. Keep information middle of the road.
- Provide best practices, data, pitfalls, access to experts.
- Promote boundaries between Federal, state, counties and cities on issues.
- Provide data and perspective, don't take sides/advocate.
- Educate, not advocate (like city managers, ICMA should provide information but leave policy up to legislators on issues like BLM, police funding).
- Provide more research at a lower price.
- A more educational approach.
- Neutral, pro-con analysis of all sides of the issue.
- Stay out of it.
- Provide examples of best practices.
- Avoid official platforms/standards.
- Share information – both sides, not opinion.
- More middle-grounded.
- Don't take political positions.
- Too challenging to take stances with broad area of representation.
- For students/young people, DEI is less politicized. ICMA needs to make sure they are aware of what they're doing and how it looks to the next generation of managers.
- Provide background info, white papers on the issues to cities/members.
- Encourage love for communities.
- Stay focused on items related to growing the profession.

3. What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- Please stop spending the first hour (+) of each conference patting ourselves on the back. Get right to the training..
- Provide resources for a broad scope of issues that also affect smaller and rural communities.
- Provide toolbox, checklist for dealing with issues for free.
- Help should be applicable to size of all communities. Smaller/rural communities have different challenges.
- Smaller communities are typically not represented on ICMA's Board or committees.
- Use technology to reach out to smaller communities.
- Provide education knowledge network.
- Focus on trends.
- Knowing where to find additional federal dollars (or ARPA).
- Presenting new problems others are facing to get a headstart.
- Provide information focused on smaller cities

- Improve searchability of the best practices database.
- Provide more networking, social media chat sites for members to answer and ask questions about needs from peer cities. (Apparently it exists, but we're not aware of it).
- Expand senior rep service to hear problems first, then solve.
- Be stronger advocates in Utah for professionally managed cities.
- Better two-way communications between regional states, partners, and icma regarding tools, updates, etc.
- Quality research, best practices.
- Provide best practices and data.
- Provide information about technology solutions.
- Share "lessons learned" for cities/help identify trends in communities.
- Help managers identify key issues from other fields (i.e. GFOA, etc).
- Lower dues so we can afford to be part of ICMA, participate with others, learn.
- Provide online training library for free (or at least more affordable).
- Data, policies, best practices.
- Involvement at conferences/meeting with the states is good.
- Expert advisors on topic-specific needs.
- Grant database.
- Provide info on best practices, innovations, etc. and ability to filter by region.
- Create nexus between larger political issues and their relation to daily practical applicable municipal service delivery.

4. Given ICMA's most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left-leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

- ICMA doesn't rise above the noise of the day. Too much "dogma" and not enough focus on service delivery.
- It's complicated – some agree.
- There is concern that ICMA is not representing all views. East & West Coast have a heavy influence (not necessarily representative).
- Agree. There's been too much focus on equity, etc. Give attention to different issues.
- It is very difficult to paint all communities with the same brush nationwide.
- Black lives matter AND blue lives matter. City managers are caught in between. ICMA can't be one sided.
- Agree. While this is an important issue, this should not be the sole focus of the organization. Make this organic, not forced.

- Agree. “Equity” and “inclusion” are political buzzwords. They also focus on driving an outcome vs. an opportunity.
- Disagree. Our unconscious bias is vital to understand so we can fairly provide the best talent to the investors/residents; however, the quantity of material pushed out by ICMA is taking up the space most of the time, leaving little for all of the other principles we need to learn.
- ICMA has stepped out of its lane at times. The focus should be on growing people of all races and gender in the profession. ICMA should stay out of the politics that communities are wrestling with, focus on helping members become better city managers.
- ICMA has lost its way if it is taking official positions.
- Pragmatic best practices and operational elements to improve organizational operations.
- Both equity and inclusion are issues to be addressed but need to be focused on the profession.
- Equity and inclusion are important.
- ICMA should maintain a balanced approach. (e.g. stop racism – do better; police issues are real – hiring, retention, etc.; conversations are still important to learn how to improve; “social justice” – left to interpretation).
- We agree on the DEI question; however, there is too much emphasis, the approach feels too far to policy/philosophy side – it has drifted from the practicality side.
- ICMA doesn’t need to be another national political entity. ICMA should stay in the center and not on the fringes where controversy lies.
- I would like my membership to come with less social agenda. ICMA should be less political. D.C. politics do not represent most of us outside the Beltway.
- Agree. ICMA’s position should be neutral.

5. Do you believe the ICMA Executive Board’s statement on systemic racism and associated 6 action steps are in line with ICMA’s mission & vision as articulated in Envision ICMA?

- Not sure, but we emphasize the need to make it specific to the jobs of city managers.
- ICMA should be careful to weigh in only on issues aligned with its mission.
- It is aligned with our mission – but potentially misprioritized.
- Stick to practical management, stay out of the political/activism realm
- More information needed to provide an informed response – definition and details.
- Issuing a statement on systemic racism implies that a system is racist. What system? Does a system allow for people to be individual? We should

encourage all people to be who they are. One size doesn't necessarily fit all.

- I was not bothered by the Board/ICMA's statement on systemic racism – these were good comments, but city/county managers are not the politicians.
- Yes and no. Give tools to diagnose and address problems. Don't blanketly accuse everyone of wrongdoing. Recognize the good done on all sides.
- The organization appears to be getting very political. Focus on the Code of Ethics.
- ICMA's statement on systemic racism goes too far and is full of words that are loaded with emotion and politics (e.g. "social justice," "systemic racism"). What does systemic even mean? This policy (it is more than a statement) feels divisive rather than inclusive.

City Management Association of Delaware Quarterly Meeting – Wednesday, May 18, 2022 - Virtual:

This session was facilitated by Northeast Regional Director Karen Daly. The following is the feedback from each of the questions that were posed to 14 attendees:

Question 1:

What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive societal issues?

- Our job is to provide guidance and we are looked at by elected officials in these tough times.
- Every community is different and will address in a different way, but we are also public servants. We were part of systems that set up and supported inequality being overtly discriminatory -doesn't help the larger goal. We should promote equity but also recognize every community is at a different pace to embrace it. In order to support managers and keep pace then help make managers take little steps so they do not become lightning rods or not in keeping with community values, or in keeping with things they (we) helped establish for years. So we must work toward dismantling, but every manager may not be at the forefront

Question 2:

What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- At Northeast Regional Conference, Tackling Wicked Problems was a great session and the resources presented really helped with tools for facilitating topics on difficult conversations

- Also, Braver Angels also gave resources to reframe difficult discussions. Have the Wicked Problems speaker at a much bigger, focused session
- All are struggling with recruitment and retention in the whole country. The pandemic has caused us to change the ways we do our job – remote or flex work – numerous things we face to assist recruiting and retention. DPW and Police – what tools – what’s working in different communities

Question 3:

Given ICMA’s most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

- Disagree with that opinion. But agree that some people may have that opinion.
- When we look at society today we can all agree racism was wrong, we are no longer in a place where we are respecting people’s dignity as persons – it’s considered left leaning. Being against racism, sexism, gay would not have been considered controversial a few years ago – how do we reconcile?
- Disagree – when you bring everyone to the table you have a better team. Proven fact. More interested in what they can do for the community. Not whether they are LGBTQ.

Question 4:

Do you believe the ICMA Executive Board’s statement on systemic racism and associated six action steps are in line with ICMA’s mission and vision as articulated in Envision ICMA?

At the Northeast Regional Conference, our comments on the Code were really listened to and how we conduct ourselves, and (ICMA) will do so on how we align ourselves on this topic as well.

Question 5:

Do you feel that educating the ICMA membership about DEI is relevant to the profession in these times of political divisiveness and heightened racial tensions?

Yes. Must be done in balance. Goes back to wicked problems presentation. Helps us have conversations about things that are racially charged. But finding EVERYTHING is becoming politically charged. It’s the tools we are using that become most important. Looking also at how we deal with public art – had a meeting that go out of hand and police had to come. Using these strategies to talk about racial tensions is important. Always going to have issues about assessments and raising taxes but they will also become more polarized as the country becomes more polarized.

Whatever issue of the day is will become the most controversial and that is what you need to talk about most and something you need to become educated on and can't shy away from just because it is politically divisive.

Broadening the message is also important. We are all at different stages with different things happening in our communities. Need to also reach out to smaller communities to understand their dynamics as well.

Question 6:

Are there areas in ICMA's DEI work that should receive more emphasis or less emphasis?

other things but when we focus too specifically we alienate others who may not agree, when it is all about respect. Not about putting people in a bucket. Once you label someone you've taken away their sense of humanity so its easier to say bad things and we can't let our discussion within ICMA reduce us to that in order to be effective and we as leaders need to make sure we don't do it.

[Great Open Spaces City Management Association \(GOSCMA\) - May 24-27, 2022](#)

This session was facilitated by Mountain Plains Regional Director Karen Daly.

Question #1 – What is the appropriate role of ICMA?

- ICMA's role should be neutrality. Do research, consider all input. Don't just take a position. Don't discount a side/position. You have done that over the last 2 years, and it is diminishing your reputation.
- ICMA should provide a framework for both sides of an issue. Better understanding of the implementation of citizen engagement practices in our profession can help in our profession's management of these issues.
- If an issue is divisive, such as 50% one way and 50% another way, stay neutral on the issue.
- Listen to both sides, gather all appropriate information, and make a decision whether or not any decision is within the parameters of ICMA's mission. If not, no position statement or allocation of any resources should be made to it.
- Separate politics from management, find and examine facts and data, provide this research to members. LISTEN to views from all members.
- Focus on helping city managers navigate these things in their communities. ICMA should not take a position as an association.
- TO respond as if you were a city manager. Engage discussion from both sides – don't tell one side they are right or wrong. ICMA seems to side with one side versus both sides – alienating a portion of the membership. This is not a good example for city managers.
- Present all sides of the issues, whether agree or disagree. Just the facts.

- Provide multiple perspectives and examples of approaches throughout the profession. It is not appropriate for ICMA to represent a particular political stance while representing the profession. Talk about diversity, but don't issue official statements.

Question #2 - What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- Bring back principles of effective city management. This is a difficult question as a "challenge" is vague – some answers are technological; some are adaptive.
- Continue to share best practices.
- Have people and resources to provide information for cities to bring in as an external expert on an issue. Similar approach to promoting city manager form of government.
- Focus on helping city managers navigate these things in their communities, not to take a position as ICMA.
- Provide unbiased, nonpartisan training and resources to members.
- Keep in touch with cities under 5,000 people. Answers to challenges for these communities differ from larger cities.
- ICMA does a good job of bringing up to date, quality information on current hot button issues.
- Continue to make available via the website downloadable resources on these topics – the content should be solution-based and directly applicable.
- ICMA should be present at municipal league annual meetings to educate on the value of membership.

Question 3 – Given ICMA's most recent work on equity and inclusion some members have interpreted this work as being political or left leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

- Agree – strongly.
- Agree – just be a resource.
- Agree.
- Agree – ICMA is losing its way.
- The discussion and focus is not political. This is an important issue to address across all organizations in every city and state in this country. However, ICMA has taken this issue into a hyperfocused area. Better balance of all sides in our profession is needed.
- I disagree that ICMA has lost its way. We are still true to our mission; however, I agree that the current DEI issue has become too prominent and, while important, it has come to dominate.
- Agree – ICMA appears to align with one side of the conversation versus having a conversation with both sides. ICMA calls for diversity and inclusion yet seems to

ignore and suppress dissenting voices in the discussion. Our communities are filled with different opinions – we can't ignore community voices.

Florida City/County Management Association – June 3, 2022:

This session was facilitated by ICMA President Troy Brown, along with Southeast Regional Director Randy Reid and Senior Southeast Regional Vice President Michael Kaigler.

Question #1 – What do you want and need from ICMA?

This was warm up discussion with variety of responses including desire for more professional development and specifically training resources for city managers and commissioners, relationship building, improvement of ICMA website information, more focus on emerging leaders and student chapters. Communication on emerging trends in local government. ICMA Representation should be addressed and better online promotion of ICMA. Responses below include those from note cards collected, as well as paraphrased verbal comments summarized by Regional Director Randy Reid.

Question #2 - What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive societal issues?

- ICMA should respond to divisive issues because often these issues are Human. The brutality of black people from police is a human rights issue that should be addressed.
- If making a statement about a societal issue, tie it to the Code of Ethics.
- Forums (virtual) for discussion, include action and after - action analysis.
- The role should be to facilitate a comprehensive discussion on the topic, provide resources and help communities in their own ways.
- ICMA should focus on just the profession and not focus on opinions.
- ICMA should remain “apolitical”, but if they need to discuss those issues, they should hear input from both sides.
- Provide unbiased information and resources.
- ICMA should have a role if consistent with its values and ethics and core (unreadable).
- In the big picture its great for ICMA to play the role of ice breaking, leading the charge. At an individual level that can put a manager in a difficult position in his community or with his council.
- To be mindful of and acknowledge of a statewide or national “situation”, nut to make statements only as to how statements only as to how they impact our profession.
- Provide resources as requested.

- Hell yea!! ICMA stands as a collective voice for all of us. Represents the profession and human rights.
- Equip us with the tools to manage the conflicts we will be faced with it as we manage “society”.
- Advocacy for “what is right”. To include applicable collaboration involving other similar structured professional associations supporting both appointed and elected local government officials.
- Professional ways we can respond, people to call and reach out to as issues arise in a community
- Bring awareness and allow for dialogue.
- ICMA should make a statement. Help more the discussion and frame the discussion.
- Remain neutral!! ICMA should represent all.
- ICMA has not approached this as a conversation but an ideological initiative advocating disputable and debatable theories of white fragility, intersectionality, group identity as opposed to individual uniqueness, and avoided discussing the meaning of the repeated “social justice” language in ICMA documents.
- I believe ICMA should call for unity to fix issues, find common ground, listen to others, but not necessary always need to join the fray in issues. WE should call for civility, understanding and love.
- Acknowledge matters deserving of condemnation. Should be followed with a call to preserve what are the treads of common virtues that must be protected and preserved.
- As public servants its ICMA’s role to speak on issues that affect the profession, but it needs to provide professional context. ICMA has core values and a Code of Ethics. If something nationally happens that goes against that Code, then they have a responsibility to condemn those acts.
- ICMA should be non-political. ICMA role is to be supportive to the profession- which should also be non-political.
- Most elected officials at local level are elected without political party affiliation – ICMA should reflect that.
- I think it is appropriate to listen across the country. This listening tour is spot on. Societal issues vary by region and taking a position on certain issues may cause indigestion amongst some members; then again being uncomfortable promotes growth.
- Verbal paraphrased comments:
- Collaborate with national affiliates and NLC to assist managers have political support of elected officials for DEI.
- Assist and develop ICMA professional mentors, such as Senior Advisors, to respond to DEI issues in community.

Question 3 – Given ICMA’s most recent work on equity and inclusion some members have interpreted this work as being political or left leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

- I am not sure what ICMA has stated on issues so I cannot advise if they have been political.
- Disagree. DEI has nothing to do with politics. It is a human issue and an important conversation and practice.
- Disagree. ICMA should also acknowledge common civic virtues and provide (unreadable) a virtue
- I am unfamiliar with ICMA’s work on this topic. I do want resources made available so that I can lead my organization to reflect my community.
- NO!
- Disagree.
- ICMA “could do more”.
- Disagree I think this work is creating space where perspectives can be shared, and memories can evolve or not.
- HAVE THE CONVERSATION then decide people want to kill the idea before having the conversations
- Disagree!!!!There is nothing political about human rights.
- Disagree but we need to balance better with all the needs of the members.
- Disagree. ICMA cannot stay away from or hide. Help define it. Address it. And discuss it.
- Disagree. I think it is great ICMA is having this conversation.
- Disagree. ICMA should properly define the meaning of DEI and support this change. The problem is choosing a side however and this must be acknowledged.
- Disagree Wade into the discussion- provide FACTS- but don’t take sides
- Should not take positions I don’t know, not sure what we are talking about, An article? Webinars?
- Don’t know how to interpret either way. Any work done involving diversity, equity, and inclusion is moving in the right direction.
- We disagree. We don’t see it as political. It’s about human and civil rights. ICMA should support the laws to not discriminate. It’s progressive in a sense that it’s giving people a voice but not political.
- Disagree – you can’t ignore what is happening in society. ICMA could define diversity and inclusion and set it as an organizational value. Perhaps a joint conversation with NLC as the management side should be neutral overall. Thank you for not ignoring this issue! More discussion of DEI is needed.
- Disagree, however we should not be top heavy. We should evolve but not alienate our members.

- Help establish and distribute the facts verses opinions. Facts help build and reinforce trust and that I our goal as local leaders.
- Agree, ICMA, like many institutions have embraced “wokeism” to appear relevant.
- Disagree. (3 response)
- We all support “equality’ but I do not agree as I do not trust the progressive leadership of ICMA to rationally implement “equity’ as we are now wed to identity politics and intersectionality, the agenda of the Left
- Disagree. Inclusion and belonging are not a political issue.
- Bullshit! That is a cop out – this is humanity not politics.

Verbal paraphrased comments:

- Diversity, equity, and inclusion language are used regularly to label people or groups.
- Many DEI issues are not about race but gender issues involving individual self-definition and gender identity that are in conflicts with many managers religion and/or spiritual teachings so when is this conflict considered and how do we discuss it?
- Christianity is about love for all DEI categories and there is no conflict.

Question 4 - Do you feel that educating the ICMA membership about DEI is relevant to the profession in these times of political divisiveness and heighten racial tension.

- Absolutely, everyone needs better education about exacting what DEI is without this information the color of your skin is to likely determine your thoughts on DEI.
- Absolutely!
- Hell yes!!
- Yes (2 responses)
- Yes, these are issues we navigate all the time, we need help in understanding as many perspectives as we can.
- Yes, absolutely. It fits with President Lori’s idea of providing tools to help members deal with the societal issue.
- Yes absolutely. Beyond education I want tools to prompt civil discussions within my organization, my board, and my community.
- Educating ICMA members about DEI is relevant to the profession all the time. Regardless of times of political divisiveness. ICMA needs to be the leadership we want to see in the world.
- Yes relevant.
- Yes absolutely.... required.
- Yes, we need to provide tools for our managers to deal with this difficult topic. It effects culture of our city and organization.
- Absolutely relevant and essentially important.

- Yes, keep it to being a supportive training perspective instead of stating an opinion or suggesting the right way to do things. Every community is different. There is not one right answer.
- No brainer. Yes, educating members is the only way we will remain relevant.
- What do you mean by “educating”? Important distinction between education and pushing a political agenda.
- Yes, representing and understanding our community is essential and managers need the training to acquire these tools.
- It is, but how you frame the conversations so important so that you can create a safe space for meaningful dialogue to create a shared understanding.
- Yes, but we need to defend and promote common civic virtues, we all must share common sense of national virtues because we are a diverse country. There must be some glue that holds s together.
- The education is relevant to the profession because we have so many vacancies in local government, and we need to be able to recruit and retain talent. That talent s diverse. We must compete with private sector which has embraced DEI.
- Yes, our country is growing increasingly diverse – so being aware of it and sensitive to differences in people is getting more and more important. It hurts that we are still so behind – if we take a step back and see all humans as equal value this shouldn’t require education, but it does. We aren’t there yet. Hurts my heart.
- Yes (DEI) is key the perfect role for ICMA
- Yes, should have been there all along.
- It is relevant because everyone needs to be at the table and all points need to be heard. But that means everyone, not just those who are underrepresented. All should be seen as equal, and all experiences valued.
- Yes, we should all go through diversity, sensitivity, and ethics training annually- this should be included.
- Absolutely, educating membership is the foundation of the organizational existence.
- Yes! Are we on the same page of what DEI means? Do we know how to identify the “hack” of DEI?
- These are trending words but doesn’t mean the same thing for all. Depending on what part of the country you are from you might be clueless. Education and emotional intelligence are a must ICMA takes the lead!!

Verbal paraphrased comments:

- Teach not preach when we discuss DEI with professional members – developmental conversations.
- Stop blaming old white guys who you recognize gave many you the opportunity to enter professional management and local government.

Nebraska City/County Management Association – June 22-24, 2022:

This session was facilitated by Mountain Plains Regional Director Karen Daly. Karen noted that the members were frank about their displeasure with ICMA's political stance, but supportive of information being provided in a factual manner. There was also discussion about what value ICMA brings to them as individual members and that ICMA has been slow to provide information on some critical and timely issues (e.g. ARPA).

Question #1 – What is the appropriate role of ICMA?

- To be an unbiased resource point. Keeping a regional representation of membership so all voices are heard.
- Keeping leaders up to date on federal/state laws (informative fashion) and how they apply to municipalities (e.g. gender expression – public restrooms – what are some cities doing to comply?)
- Keep politics out of it – be informative. Serve as a voice to advocate for cities (e.g. ADA enforcement & the cost of it – unfunded mandates).
- Stick to education and support – not advocacy. Stay balanced and nonpartisan like a city manager/administrator.
- Informational, not political or pushing an agenda (nonpartisan).
- Be a resource. Be careful about staying neutral.
- Make sure ICMA's first position on a matter is gathering information from members before taking action which can be seen as being partisan.
- ICMA can be more timely in reporting data and providing resources.
- Give members tools/policies to do our jobs. Stay NEUTRAL. Don't be partisan/political. Ask members first before pressing policies.
- ICMA has forgotten that most of our cities are under 5,000 population. They need to gear the cost of the programs to the population. For example, we have tax lids. After paying \$1,000 for membership and another \$1,500 to attend a conference, no even including the mid-year conference or the state conferences, asking for another \$149-1,500 for a class/program is too much. When DEI seminars are free but "Talking with Police Chiefs" is \$249, you are creating a financial barrier preventing access to a program that might well solve the other issue.

Question #2 - What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- Provide education and networking opportunities. Showcase innovations and joint efforts.
- Provide information to define and solutions used elsewhere.
- Webinars should be free. Members often have to go to council for additional \$\$ for webinars.

- Scaled resources based on population size of communities. It is very different from 2,000 to 20,000 to 200,000, etc.
- Members should receive additional discounts on training.
- Make ICMA Connect's archive searchable.
- Ensure information is timely (e.g. NLC was a leader on ARPA, not ICMA).
- Maintain educational/informational resources.
- Reduce costs for online webinars – these are a significant additional expense on top of \$\$\$ membership.
- Model using "listserv"
- Make trainings more affordable and accessible.
- Providing access to free or inexpensive resources or thought leaders/ presentations on specific resources. Scalable resources that can apply to cities of all sizes.

Question 3 – Given ICMA's most recent work on equity and inclusion some members have interpreted this work as being political or left leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree?

- Agree – there is less neutrality.
- Agree! Discussing the issue is fine. The recent approach has been partisan to the extreme.
- Agree based on most recent monthly magazine, for example. We don't want to shy away from the topics, but we do want to have a balanced approach or balance of information from ICMA.
- Agree about loss of neutrality; but disagree that ICMA has lost its way – although it may not be perceived as neutral.
- ICMA must be political, but not partisan. Remain neutral and bound by good data.
- Agree ICMA has not been neutral and is leaning left. Perceptions are important. Local governments are about equity and making people feel included.
- Work on inclusion and equity should be presented as informative, not political.

Question #4 - Do you believe the ICMA Executive Board's statement on systemic racism and associated six action steps are in line with ICMA's mission and vision as articulated in Envision ICMA?

- DEI shouldn't be the prominent issue at every training. Action steps are too focused. Members are being force fed and are being accused of being racist.
- Generally agree with action steps but start to get nervous when a step says we will revisit the Code of Ethics and impact all 12 tenets. Action – 1 action step didn't take place until 2 years later – this somewhat calls into question the intentions.
- No – action statements are focused on one/two issues (equity and social justice), where the mission and vision are more broad.

- Force feeding an assumed “fault” that issues are across all levels of government and that all leaders or people have racism.
- ICMA knee-jerked on this policy and violated member input. ICMA was not a good example.
- Yes. But the coastal opinions are not the universal opinions. The people who live in the Midwest are not in agreement on issues with the people in the East or West.
- Only partly. The intent to review and clarify is one thing. To modify by adding “loaded” terms is going too far. The force in the six action steps is described at the end of the statements. Who decides the “required changes” that need to be driven?

Question #5 - Do you feel that educating the ICMA membership about DEI is relevant to the profession in these times of political divisiveness and heightened racial tensions?

- Yes. ICMA needs to recognize that east/west coast perspective is not representative. Timing is not the best. There are other ways to engage that could have been used. ICMA is imposing perspectives instead of teaching.
- Yes, regarding education. Even presenting diverse opinions.
- Yes, however, there was a concern with the step involving equity and inclusion training on a permanent basis.
- Educate = bring awareness of case studies – be aware of geographical locations in relation to levels of divisiveness and tensions.
- Yes. Key word EDUCATE. ICMA should not force feed. Education should not be politically biased. I would be ok with hearing strong opinions on both sides, but education should be affordable for ICMA members.
- A balanced approach is important.
- DEI is relevant to all professions and should be an aspect of professional educational resources at all times regardless of what is currently happening socially.

Question #6 - Are there areas of ICMA’s DEI work that should receive more emphasis or less emphasis?

- Less militant across the board.
- Less emphasis on pre-conceived fault and more emphasis on balanced education and on actual laws. There is a spectrum – this is important.
- Socioeconomic status is an area of emphasis.
- Make aware of benefits of DEI and ways to appropriately incorporate DEI concepts into discussions without making perceived judgements. Recognize that change happens slowly.

North Dakota City/County Management Association – June 22-24, 2022:

This session was facilitated by Mountain Plains Regional Vice President Kenneth Williams. Mr. Williams noted that there were 40-50 people in attendance at the event. The ICMA DEI listening session had mixed reviews – some were disappointed that this was a listening session and not a training on DEI – the confusion probably resulted from the title of the session not clearly communicating the intent. There seemed a reluctance to address the subject in the room; additionally, many of those in attendance were not ICMA members who were unaware of ICMA’s DEI efforts. DEI was certainly a tense discussion in the room. ICMA might make this easier by letting members know why DEI efforts are important and how they apply to the job of city/county manager.

The majority of those who participated were in favor of ICMA’s DEI efforts; however, there was a vocal minority (2-3) who thought ICMA was going too far. The majority felt ICMA’s role was appropriate, that ICMA’s statement on systemic racism was appropriate, but the consensus was that ICMA’s emphasis on DEI was borderline in being too much.

Question #1 – What do you want and need from ICMA?

- Update the ICMA blog with more frequent articles.
- Guidance on issues like policing, cannabis, housing, finance, pandemic, safety, risk management, compliance.
- Training on areas like grant writing, funding/finance, safety, risk management, management.
- Guidance on issues such as policing, staffing, cannabis, housing, health care.
- Provide facts on the issue. Enable the membership to access a library of best practices from around the world regarding issues.
- Guidance on how to speak to individuals on keeping negative thoughts to themselves when speaking in group settings.

Question #2 - What is the appropriate role of ICMA in responding to divisive social issues?

- Work on educating everyone.
- I am supportive of responding, but not by taking a stance. ICMA should provide resources.
- Ensure diversity and inclusion within ICMA to expand available workforce pool of employees.
- Be supportive of diversity and inclusion based on race, gender, ethnic groups, age, religion, sexual orientation, citizenship status, military service, etc.

Question #3 - Do you believe the ICMA Executive Board’s statement on systemic racism and associated six action steps are in line with ICMA’s mission and vision as articulated in Envision ICMA?

- Yes (x5)
- After hearing the statement, I do believe it is in line.
- Not sure about ICMA's desire to be involved in transparency in public safety. Is this part of their mission?
- No - I do not believe this is in line with ICMA's mission.
- Not familiar with the action steps.
- No comment. Not a member.
- ICMA should not make statements relating to political activities at the national level.

Question #4 - Do you feel that educating the ICMA membership about DEI is relevant to the profession in these times of political divisiveness and heightened racial tensions?

- Absolutely agree. It is relevant at any time, not just during political divisiveness or racial tension.
- Replace "educating" with "informing."
- Yes, while the newsletter and regional/annual conferences are good; general membership with small or no resources don't see this information.
- Yes; however, diversity and inclusion should be part of leadership development and not a standalone subject.
- No, it is not relevant to the profession.
- Disagree- working toward the betterment of humanity.
- I believe it is relevant and necessary to educate but the charge part should reflect group input.
- Always relevant to educate members on current happenings within the world.

Question 5 - Are there areas of ICMA's DEI work that should receive more emphasis or less emphasis?

- Not knowing the work currently referenced, it is valuable to know current trends nationwide. More work could be done to communicate those results to membership in a timely manner.
- I think ICMA continues to provide DEI education that is more than sufficient.
- More emphasis on how comments apply to general operational issues and how best practices can benefit the improvement of operations.
- Emphasize "all" and not on a specific race/color.

Question 6 - What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- Make resources available for training on best practices for supervisors and management.
- Provide an expert to help and show the best practices from other areas. A (pick your color) phone for support.

- Engage the ICMA membership with real examples of conflict resolution.
- Federal advocacy on key issues.
- Be a resource to communities on best practices and give guidance.
- Identify similar challenges in other locations and provide contact information for other individuals who may have experience in the situation.
- Instruction on how to achieve community involvement in smaller municipalities at all times.
- Resources on legal issues, employee policies, project funding and planning.

[76th New England Management Institute, MTCMA - Wednesday, August 10:](#)

Discussion facilitated by ICMA Vice President Bill Fraser with 80 participants in attendance.

Due to time constraints, managers and attendees were asked to have small group discussions at their tables on Questions 1 and 2 for about ten minutes and then each table was asked to report out.

Question #1 - What do you feel is the appropriate role of ICMA when responding to potentially divisive societal issues?

- ICMA should stay neutral unless it has something directly to do with our profession
- Stay neutral
- Neutral
- DEI is important and needs to be understood even if some oppose it
- Stay neutral
- We are in the people business and DEI is happening now. If ICMA is willing to educate us in this, then it is a good thing.
- Agree on neutrality – the landscape is changing and ICMA has a responsibility to be a leader in this
- ICMA should not be taking a position in most cases but in some cases, like George Floyd, it should take a position because it is a leader (just should not happen all the time).
- If data is there you just can't stick your head in the sand
- Neutral – ICMA doesn't need to cover everything
- Recruitment and retention alone require this, if only to show there is a place for everyone
- Need to hear the voices of those impacted directly and have them involved. Recommend more on why these messages are needed

- How to convene conversations with the public on these issues and ways to gain consensus

Question 2 - What can ICMA do to help you respond to the challenges in your communities?

- Provide resources to access information on said issues
- More resources for managers
- Providing information is important but not taking a position that alienates members at the same time
- Stuff on depression and stress that was in PM Magazine was great and extremely helpful; keep it coming
- Having resources available
- Access to speakers on subjects of interest; receive guidance
- Legal options/implications of actions
- Resources important to help process and work through these issues in your communities
- Resources – communications/briefings that communities can have to provide information about these issues as well.
- Newsletter on emerging issues in our region – not broad spectrum all at once.

Question #3 - Given ICMA's most recent work on equity and inclusion, some members have interpreted this work as being political or left leaning or that ICMA has lost its way. Agree or disagree? (This question was asked of the audience as a whole, if they agreed or disagreed)

- One person agreed with this statement
- With exception of the one individual above, all disagreed with the statement above:
Important that all your staff had DEI training – the world is changing so people feel a professional responsibility, it is not political.
- During a recent selection for a position, three of the finalists asked the town manager what they were doing in their community around DEI. This issue was very important to their candidates.

Tracking Spreadsheet for DEI Listening Sessions with State Association Partners
Printed 9/2/2022

Names of Contacts Sent Troy's 3/11/22 Invitation to DEI Listening Session	State	Did the Association Request a DEI Session with ICMA?	Name of State Association	Meeting Dates Requested	ICMA Representation	Notes
Ken Grimes	Alabama	NO	Alabama City/County Management Association			
Ms. Julia B. Heflin	Alabama	NO	Alabama City/County Management Association			
Mr. John M. Moosey	Alaska	NO	Alaska Municipal Management Association			
Ms. Julie Karins, CPM, SPHR, ICMA-CM	Arizona	YES	Arizona City/County Management Association (ACMA)	7/20-7/22/22	No ICMA rep available to attend; Troy emailed Julie to extend a written feedback option, w/an 8/31/22 deadline.	Feedback forwarded to Amber on 8/8/22.
Rachel Claffey	Arizona	NO	League of Arizona Cities and Towns			
Whitnee Bullerwell	Arkansas	YES	Arkansas City Management Association (ACMA)	4/21-4/22/22	RVP Diane Stoddard and RD Karen Daly	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. Gary Don Brinkley	Arkansas	NO	Arkansas City Management Association (ACMA)			
Mr. Steven R. Rogers, ICMA-CM	California	NO	N/A			
Dr. Kurt O. Wilson	California	NO	CAL-ICMA/California Local Government Management Collaborative			
Mr. Scott P. Trainor and Ms. Mary Ann Attridge	Colorado	YES	Colorado City and County Management Association (CCCMA)	4/13-4/15/22	RVP Ray Gonzalez and RD Karen Daly	Session not held due to time constraints
Mr. Peter P. Souza	Connecticut	NO	Connecticut Town and City Management Association (CTCMA)	6/3/2022	RVP Scott Colby	Could not change agenda to accommodate request for DEI listening session; association engaged with ICMA independent of Troy's invite for DEI listening session.
Mrs. Kristy L Rogers, MPA	Delaware	YES	City Management Association of Delaware	5/18/2022	RD Tricia Vinchesi	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. Horace A. McHugh, ICMA-CM	Florida	YES	Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA)	6/3/2022	President Troy Brown, RVP Michael Kaigler, and RD Randy Reid	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. Casey Cook	Florida	NO	Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA)			
Ms. Carol Russell	Florida	NO	Florida City/County Management Association (FCCMA)			
Ms. Peggy Merriss, ICMA-CM; Ms. Marcia Hampton; Ms. Mara Shaw; Ms. Erica Powell	Georgia	YES	Georgia City/County Management Association (GCCMA)	10/12-10/14/22	RVP Michael Kaigler available; however, no DEI listening sessions will be held after August 2022. Call being coordinated for Troy and Marcia Hampton re: outcome of the Spring Conference member discussion on the politicization of DEI issues.	Would need to consult Troy for outcome of call with Marcia Hampton
Ms. Marcia Hampton	Georgia	YES	Georgia City/County Management Association (GCCMA)	10/12-10/14/22	RVP Michael Kaigler available; however, no DEI listening sessions will be held after August 2022. Troy has offered to speak/meet w/Marcia Hampton re: outcome of Spring Conference member discussion on the politicization of DEI issues or to receive a formal letter of representation from the association.	
Ms. Mara O. Shaw	Georgia	YES	Georgia City/County Management Association (GCCMA)	10/12-10/14/22	RVP Michael Kaigler available; however, no DEI listening sessions will be held after August 2022. Troy has offered to speak/meet w/Marcia Hampton re: outcome of Spring Conference member discussion on the politicization of DEI issues or to receive a formal letter of representation from the association.	
Ms. Erica A. Powell	Georgia	YES	Georgia City/County Management Association (GCCMA)	10/12-10/14/22	RVP Michael Kaigler available; however, no DEI listening sessions will be held after August 2022. Troy has offered to speak/meet w/Marcia Hampton re: outcome of Spring Conference member discussion on the politicization of DEI issues or to receive a formal letter of representation from the association.	
Unknown	GOSCCMA	YES	Great Open Spaces City Management Association	5/24-5/27/22	RD Karen Daly	GOSCCMA engaged ICMA for DEI session independent of Troy's invite. Amber to verify if feedback cards received.
Mr. Robert C Donnan	ICMA	NO	N/A			

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Mr. Mitchel B. Humble	Idaho	NO	Idaho City/County Management Association			
Ms. Dawn S. Peters, MPA	Illinois	YES	Illinois City/County Management Association	3/25/2022	RVP Molly Mehner and RD Cheryl Hilvert	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. Nathan Thorne, MPA	Indiana	NO	Indiana Municipal Management Association			
Ms. Erin G Jamison-Koenig	Indiana	NO	Indiana Association of Cities and Towns			
Ms. Elizabeth A. Bonz	Iowa	YES	Iowa City/County Management Association (ICCMA)	7/13-7/15/22		No ICMA rep available to attend; Troy emailed Beth Bonz on 6/30/22 to extend a written feedback option, w/an 8/31/22 deadline. Corri also attended a member meeting in March. Email feedback from Association is pending.
Mr. Michael Shields	Iowa	NO	League of Iowa Cities			
Ms. Kate Cooley	Kansas	NO	League of Kansas Municipalities			
Mr. Jonathan C. Mitchell, MPA, ICMA-CM	Kansas	NO	Kansas Association of City/County Management			
Mr. Robert J. Schrage, MPA	Kentucky	NO	Kentucky City/County Management Association			
Mr. Brian K. Dehner	Kentucky	NO	Kentucky City/County Management Association			
Mr. Jay A Feyler	Maine	YES	Maine Town City and County Managers Association (MTCMA)	8/10-8/12/22	RVP Bill Fraser and RD Tricia Vinchesi	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Ms. Alicia A Gaudet	Maine	NO	Maine Municipal Association			
Ms. Laura S. Allen, CPFO, ICMA-CM	Maryland	NO	Maryland City/County Management Association			Could not change agenda to accommodate request for DEI listening session
Ms. Denise Baker	Massachusetts	YES	Massachusetts Municipal Management Association (MMA)	7/21/2022	Past President Jim Malloy and RVP Bill Fraser	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. George H. Dunham, MPA	Massachusetts	NO	Massachusetts Municipal Management Association (MMA)			
Kelly Warren	Michigan	NO	Michigan Municipal League			
Ms. Christine M. Burns	Michigan	NO	Michigan Municipal Executives			
Ms. Madison Hagenau	Minnesota	NO	League of Minnesota Cities			
Ms. Laurie A. Hokkanen, MPA	Minnesota	NO	Minnesota City/County Management Association			
Ms. Pamela J. Ulrich, CA	Mississippi	NO	Mississippi City and County Management Association			
Mr. Michael Cain	Mississippi	NO	Michigan Municipal Executives			
Mrs. Emily Koenigsfeld	Missouri	NO	Missouri City/County Management Association			
Mr. Benjamin C. DeClue, MPA	Missouri	NO	Missouri City/County Management Association			
Mr. Philip C. Green, MPA	Nebraska	YES	Nebraska City/County Management Association (NCMA)	6/22-6/24/22	RVP Diane Stoddard and RD Karen Daly	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Ms. Christine M. Vuletich, MBA	Nevada	YES	Nevada City/County Management Association (NVCMA)	5/19-5/20/22	RVP Peter Troedsson	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Ms. Gail Dixon	New Hampshire	NO	Municipal Management Association of New Hampshire			
Mr. Alan Zalkind	New Jersey	NO	New Jersey Municipal Management Association			
Mr. Gregory D. Martin, ICMA-CM	New Mexico	YES	New Mexico City Management Association (NMCMA) (in partnership with the New Mexico Municipal League - NMML)	6/22-6/24/22	RVP Kenneth Williams and RD Karen Daly	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.

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AJ Forte	New Mexico	NO	New Mexico Municipal League			
Ms. Patricia Dwyer	New York	NO	New York State City/County Management Association			Could not change agenda to accommodate request for DEI listening session
Dr. Michael R Hattery	New York	NO	New York State City/County Management Association			Could not change agenda to accommodate request for DEI listening session
Mr. James M. Palmer	New York	NO	New York State City/County Management Association			Could not change agenda to accommodate request for DEI listening session
Mr. David F. Burke	New York	NO	New York State City/County Management Association			Could not change agenda to accommodate request for DEI listening session
Dr. Ceclia Watt	New York	NO	New York State City/County Management Association			Could not change agenda to accommodate request for DEI listening session
Mr. Robert E. Shepherd, Jr.	North Carolina	YES	North Carolina City/County Management Association (NCCMA)	6/23-6/25/22	RVP Valmarie Turner and RD Randy Reid	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. Lance L. Metzler, ICMA-CM	North Carolina	NO	North Carolina City and County Association			
Mr. David Tuan	North Dakota	NO	Great Open Spaces City Management Association			
Mrs. Sheryl M Long, BA, MA	Ohio	YES	Ohio City/County Management Association	8/18/2022	No ICMA rep available to attend; Sandra emailed ICMA. Troy emailed Sandra to extend a written feedback option, w/an 8/31/22 deadline.	Email feedback from Association is pending.
Sandra Miller	Ohio	YES	Ohio City/County Management Association	8/18/2022	No ICMA rep available to attend; Sandra emailed ICMA. Troy emailed Sandra to extend a written feedback option, w/an 8/31/22 deadline.	Email feedback from Association is pending.
Ms. Megan Hasting	Ohio	YES	Ohio City/County Management Association	8/18/2022	No ICMA rep available to attend; Sandra emailed ICMA. Troy emailed Sandra to extend a written feedback option, w/an 8/31/22 deadline.	Email feedback from Association is pending.
Mr. Dave Slezcicky, MBA, ICMA-CM	Oklahoma	YES	City Management Association of Oklahoma (CMAO)	7/20-7/22/22	Per Karen Daly, no DEI on the agenda, and Dianne Stoddard gathered info in a prior session.	Feedback should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. Steven C. Whitlock, ICMA-CM, MPA	Oklahoma	NO	Oklahoma Municipal Management Services			
Ms. Susie Marston	Oregon	YES	Oregon City/County Managers Association (in partnership with the League of Oregon Cities)	3/25/2022	RVP Peter Troedsson and RD Pat Martel	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Ms. Christy S. Wurster, MPA	Oregon	NO				
Mr. Harry N. Krot and Ms. Amy K. Farkas, MPA	Pennsylvania	YES	Association for Pennsylvania Municipal Management (APMM)	5/24/2022	President Troy Brown and RD Tricia Vinchesi	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. James Robert Tierney, MS, BS	Rhode Island	NO	Rhode Island City and Town Management Association			
Ms. Rebecca Vance, ICMA-CM, AICP	South Carolina	YES	South Carolina City/County Management Association (SCCCMA)	6/16-6/19/22	President Troy Brown, RVP Michael Kaigler, and RD Randy Reid	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Ms. Alison Burkey, MPA	South Carolina	YES	South Carolina City/County Management Association (SCCCMA)	6/16-6/19/22	President Troy Brown, RVP Michael Kaigler, and RD Randy Reid	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Ms. Kendra B. Stewart	South Carolina	NO	South Carolina City and County Management Association			
Ms. Stephanie R. Ellwein, ICMA-CM	South Dakota	NO	South Dakota City Management Association			

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Lori Martinec	South Dakota	NO	South Dakota Municipal League			
Mr. William Patrick Hardy	Tennessee	NO	Tennessee City Management Association (TNCMA)			
Mr. Jeffrey Broughton, ICMA-CM	Tennessee	YES	Tennessee City Management Association (TNCMA)	10/26-10/28/22	TBD if a Board Member will attend this conference; no DEI listening sessions will be held after August 2022	TNCMA sent a position statement to Troy and the Presidential Trio. Does Amber have a copy?
Mr. Timothy (Tim) J. Ellis, CPM, CPRP	Tennessee	NO	Tennessee City Management Association (TNCMA)			
Ms. Kim E. Pendergraft	Texas	YES	Texas City Management Association	6/8-6/10/22	RVP Kenneth Williams available to assist; however, TCMA has no time allocated on their agenda for the DEI listening session	
Ms. Sereniah M. Breland	Texas	NO	Texas City Management Association			
Mrs. Erin L. Wells, MPA	Utah	YES	Utah City/County Management Association	4/19/2022	RVP Diane Stoddard	
Ms. Karen Horn	Vermont	NO	Vermont League of Cities and Towns			Could not change agendas to accommodate request for DEI listening session
Mr. Brian B Story	Vermont	NO	Vermont Town and City Management Association			Could not change agendas to accommodate request for DEI listening session
Ms. Janet Areson	Virginia	NO	Virginia Municipal League			
Craig Meadows	Virginia	YES	Virginia Local Government Management Association	6/10/2022	Molly Harlow contacted ICMA to engage, and former Board member Laura Fitzpatrick attended on behalf of ICMA.	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Mr. Adam Lincoln, MPA	Washington	YES	Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA)	6/22/2022	President Jeff Towery	Feedback cards should've been sent to Amber.
Ms. Tracy Burrows	Washington	NO	Washington City/County Management Association (WCMA)			
Mr. Travis L. Blosser	West Virginia	NO	West Virginia Municipal League			
Caitlin Stene, MPA	Wisconsin	NO	Wisconsin City/County Management Association			
Ms. Alexandra Galindo	Wisconsin	NO	Wisconsin City/County Management Association			

DEI Insights from the 2022 Membership Survey

2,850 members responded to the Membership Survey conducted in May 2022.

Usage and Relevance of DEI Resources

This survey included a series of new questions concerning major priority areas of ICMA activities over the last year, including DEI. Given that significant data already exists related to individual events and content pieces (e.g., registrations, participants, site visits, downloads, etc.), members were asked about their overall frequency of usage and relevance of content.

- About half of all respondents had never (19%) or rarely (28%) utilized ICMA resources or content on DEI over the last year. 38% said they utilized these resources sometimes; 12% utilized them often; and 3% utilized them regularly.
 - Responses are generally similar across member types; though Life members are more likely to have never used these resources, and Students and Affiliates used them slightly more frequently.
 - Newer members (first year especially, but up to 10 years as a member) were more likely than oldest members (tenure of 30+ years) to use these resources.
- Overall, half of respondents agree (39%) or strongly agree (12%) that ICMA resources on DEI increased their own understanding of issues. 35% were neutral.
 - Agreement is generally similar across member types, including Life and Retired members that used these resources. The rate of disagreement is highest among a segment of longest-tenured members, but across that entire group of members, 50% still agree or strongly agree that resources have increased their understanding.
- 39% agree (30%) or strongly agree (9%) that ICMA resources on DEI have been useful in addressing issues in their communities. 45% are neutral.
 - Affiliate members were more likely to report using ICMA's DEI resources in their communities, as were newer members (especially those within their first year).

Qualitative Comments

DEI & Member Satisfaction

As in the past, the survey prompts for follow-up comments when the member provides a neutral or negative/dissatisfied response to a metric (i.e., we do not prompt them to elaborate on positive responses).

Over 300 comments were provided from those less than satisfied with their membership. Most comments are from those that feel neutral rather than dissatisfied. The vast majority express non-specific sentiments about limited benefits especially relative to cost, and/or question the relevance to or impacts on day-to-day work (with some acknowledging an additional factor of being a new or retired member).

About 20 members (roughly 5% of all comments received) mention DEI specifically, often relative to a focus on other topics. Sample comments:

- *There is not enough focus on becoming better managers, emerging trends, or effective practices. Too much time is spent on DEI efforts. (Neutral 14-year member)*
- *I believe ICMA has focused too much in the area of DEI in the past two years and needs to return to a more balanced approach. (Neutral 35-year member)*
- *The DEI initiative seems to be pointing fingers rather than working cooperatively. (Neutral 16-year member)*

- *ICMA has lost its focus on the issues important to our communities. We're now laser-focused on DEI, to the exclusion of most other important topics. DEI has a place, but it isn't at the forefront of EVERYTHING ICMA does. (Dissatisfied 16-year member)*
- *Stop focusing so much on DEI. Enough already. (Dissatisfied 3-year member)*

Roughly 40 members (about 10-15% of all comments received) framed their concerns around ICMA's perceived political or social/social justice agenda. Examples include:

- *The entire organization seems to have shifted politically away from neutral. (Neutral 3-year member)*
- *My satisfaction with ICMA has declined. ICMA has moved from the primary focus of building great service organizations to being woke. (Neutral 14-year member)*
- *I feel like the focus of ICMA has become more about social justice instead of focusing on the promotion of good management for our community, engaging with and implementing the elected officials' desires and promoting the use of professionalism to advance our communities. (Very dissatisfied 21-year member)*
- *I believe the organization has become too political and progressive agenda focused and lacks an understanding of more ordinary challenges facing communities. (Dissatisfied 26-year member)*
- *I believe the organization has strayed from its primary mission. I do not find significant value in the resources and materials that the organization provides to members and I do not believe that the organization is doing enough to advocate for the merits of the professional, ethical, and nonpartisan principles on which the organization was founded. (Neutral 26-year member)*

While not a dominant theme on their own, another 5-10% of comments speak to a general loss of touch or focus of the organization without explicitly tying to DEI, politics, or social issues. Examples include:

- *Less concerned about core professional development. (Neutral 31-year member)*
- *ICMA seems to be losing its focus on the Promoting and Developing the City Management profession. (Dissatisfied 12-year member)*
- *I have been a member of ICMA for almost 40 years. This includes serving on various committees including my current service as a chairman on one of the ICMA task forces. Over the past 2-3 years I have felt that the organization has lost touch with our membership. (Dissatisfied 39-year member)*

Additional Comments

The following are a sample of comments providing varying perspectives on DEI activities.

- ICMA has been a massive part of driving me to advance my career, interests, and skillset. I badly want ICMA to serve as the same source of inspiration for early career professionals, or those considering getting into the profession. I understand the need to have discussions about any and all problems facing local government, and that certainly includes issues relative to DEI; however, ICMA's focus on this topic has been overbearing in some cases. In recent months, I have sensed some level of moderation on that subject, which I hope is purposeful. (11-year member)
- Why have we chosen Diversity, Equity and Inclusion as an area of focus? I believe we are undermining Tenant 7 of our own code of ethics by taking up a hot button political issue in the Social Justice movement. Why do we host Women's Leadership Conferences, but not Men's Leadership Conferences? We should ensure equality of opportunity in local government, not equality of outcome; ICMA has been doing that for decades. ICMA should remain separate from the social justice movement and cease advancing it. Justice is a perfectly fine word all by itself; when it is modified by the word "social" any action taken as a result becomes inherently "unjust". (3-year member)
- I am very concerned about the direction in which ICMA is heading. ICMA's emphasis on "equity" as defined by ICMA, is a great concern for me. Not only is contrary to foundational civil rights law but it is also contrary to the principle of equal opportunity. (28-year member)
- I think ICMA's efforts over the past few years have caused unnecessary division within the organization. I agree with the effort to improve DEI, but ICMA appears to be ignoring voices in this discussion. Unfortunately, our communities are made up of diverse voices that have opinions, whether we like it or not. With ICMA ignoring dissenting voices, even appearing to be hostile toward them, it shows a lack of reality to the real work experiences managers face every day. I fear we will lose credibility in our communities if "we" don't include all voices in the discussion, including those we disagree with, versus attacking them. (19-year member)
- Younger and mid-level professionals need to know the business. DEI is important, but first they need to know how best to deliver the services people are counting on and paying rates and taxes to provide. Next, relate DEI to service delivery, what does inequitable counter service look like, how do we build equity in the delivery of
- If ICMA were to stop offering professional development around diversity, equity, and inclusion, this would likely impact my interest in remaining as a member. I think the training you are offering is essential. (14-year member)
- ICMA doesn't seem to be appealing to the interest of younger members who care about issues like Climate Change / Equity and Inclusion / Entrepreneurial Leadership. ICMA is fine for me ... but I think it comes up short for the next generation of managers. I would be suggesting APA and maybe local City Management Associations -- but not ICMA. (17-year member)
- I appreciate ICMA's commitments to ethics, equity and inclusion, and thought that the recent issue of PM magazine featuring a glossary of terms was very helpful. (20-year retired member)
- There needs to be more discussion and understanding on equity and equality and what they mean to our profession. (28-year member)
- One thing that I've been thinking about is how ICMA and its members can convey the importance of DEI work to members who perceive this work as Political. We cannot move the work forward alone or disparately in this field. (3-year affiliate member)
- Thank you for all your hard work. The DEI component is such an important topic and I appreciate ICMA leading the way on it. (3-year affiliate member)
- I know there has been pushback from some members, but I commend ICMA's DEI efforts. (9-year affiliate member)
- The DEI focus has helped normalize and professionalize the topic but the content has not been super valuable yet for us. We're looking for more anti racism perspective, and demonstrable efforts to eliminate disparities using an equity lens. (7-year affiliate member)

water, sewer, street lighting, street maintenance, library, community centers, police, fire, etc. (17-year member)