

ICMA

student chapters

STUDENT CHAPTER TOOLKIT



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ABOUT STUDENT CHAPTERS

Beginning and maintaining an ICMA Student Chapter at your college or University not only benefits you the student, but it also benefits you the next generation local government administrator. The purpose of the ICMA Student chapter program, started in 2010, is to introduce and integrate students of all ages to the local government management profession.

As a part of ICMA's Next Generation Initiatives, chapters exist to establish connections between ICMA, schools, students, state associations, and managers.

Content and program activities are a partnership between ICMA and the colleges/universities. ICMA strives to create program content that engages and excites current MPA/MPP students about the profession of city/county management. Through our student chapters, we also hope to attract undergraduate students who are interested in public service, but may not be aware of career possibilities in local government.



140 Student Chapters



OVER 1,200 Student Members



20 International Chapters

3 KEY PHASES OF A STUDENT CHAPTER

PHASE 1: ESTABLISH

Each chapter develops their own charter, by laws, strategic plan, and establishes a student chapter board with a designated President.

Each chapter must have a Student Chapter Advisor and ICMA Chapter Mentor. It is the responsibility of the chapter to create relationship with mentor in the community.

PHASE 2: RECRUIT

Chapters are responsible for recruiting members and having them sign up for ICMA membership. Each chapter is different and some require chapter dues for meetings and and events.

Each chapter has unlimited memberships. Students receive a 2-year membership and free registration to ICMA conferences.

PHASE 3: MAINTENANCE

Chapters hold meetings, engage guest presenters, and engage with other chapters. Engage with student chapter alumni, ICMA members in the region, and state/regional associations. Chapters can submit their best event held throughout the year for the Best Chapter Event Contest to receive funds for the annual conference.

Chapters submit an annual report that discusses what the chapter accomplished throughout the year.

PHASE 1: ESTABLISH

Starting a student chapter is easy. There is no chapter-establishment fee. Once established, all chapter members will be eligible for free student memberships.

1 Secure Student Chapter Leadership

Each student chapter needs a president, faculty advisor, and chapter mentor. The leadership of the student chapter is vital to the success and sustainability of the student chapter.

Student Chapter President- an active student member that takes the lead on student chapter communications, recruitments, and events. Serves as a liaison for the chapter and ICMA.

Student Chapter Faculty Advisor- an MPA professor or program director to act as the chapter's faculty advisor. Serve as a liaison for the chapter and ICMA. Responsible for ensuring the chapter is active and receives ICMA communications. The university is entitled to one complimentary academic membership, which is reserved for the chapter advisor.

Student Chapter Mentor- a local government professional in your area (ideally an ICMA member interested in shared responsibility for the success of the chapter) to act as the chapter mentor. The Chapter's Mentor is primarily a resource in the profession whom the chapter members can go to for guidance or connections in the field, use as a guest speaker, use to get access to other guest speakers or as a judge for chapter events, and so on. The second role of the Management Mentor is as a stabilizing force should the faculty advisor leave the school. With both a Faculty Advisor and a Management Mentor, we reduce the chance of a chapter dissolving should one of them depart.

If your search for a mentor in your area is unsuccessful, contact ICMA for assistance. Student chapter mentors do not receive free membership to ICMA for their service, although we highly recommend they consider joining.

2 Complete the Student Chapter Agreement

Once you have determined the leaders of your student chapter, you will complete the student chapter agreement here. Each chapter is encouraged to create a student chapter-specific email to ensure communications continue when the president graduates or the faculty advisor leaves the university. Complete the [Student Chapter Agreement](#).

3 Create your Charter and Develop a Strategic Plan

Each student chapter should create a charter that defines and establishes the purpose of the organization. This will help guide future student chapter. You can find a template and examples in the back of this packet.

Consider developing a strategic plan for the chapter. Some of the most successful chapters attribute that success to a commitment to a strategic plan. It may be a tedious process, but it will come in handy, especially during leadership transitions. Be sure the plan will get the chapter through at least one leadership transition. It will help guide the next board and will give them time to get in the swing of things before they must develop a plan of their own.

PHASE 1: ESTABLISH



WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO BE A STUDENT CHAPTER MEMBER?

Any full or part-time undergraduate or graduate student who is currently not an ICMA member or in a local government position of department head or higher.

Student Chapter Agreement

Our university/college/school/program, acknowledges launching or continuing an ICMA Student Chapter at our school. In doing so, we agree to:

- Ensure our chapter members successfully join ICMA.
- Develop a charter for our chapter and submit to ICMA within a reasonable amount of time after initial assembly.
- Appoint an official chapter faculty advisor (an administrator or lecturer/professor from the school or delegated partner).
- Appoint an official chapter practitioner advisor/mentor in the profession (a manager or deputy/assistant from a nearby or US local government).
- Form a core of leadership for our chapter from among the student body and designate an officer (usually the Chapter President) to be the lead point of contact with ICMA.
- Acknowledge that our chapter includes one complimentary academic membership for an academic at our school.
- Communicate any issues to ICMA in a timely manner, if assistance is needed.
- Forward or otherwise distribute communications from ICMA to our student membership.
- Create and maintain an email address for chapter use (e.g. ICMAStudentsBGU@gmail.com)
- Submit an annual summary (1-2 pages) detailing our activities and accomplishments for posting on the ICMA website at the end of our academic year.
- Ensure chapter members abide by the ICMA Code of Ethics* while they are affiliated as a member through this Student Chapter. As a member, your actions reflect upon the other members of the association.
- Acknowledge that we may be an official ICMA Student Chapter as long as we remain active and that ICMA encourages our school to recruit an unlimited number of student members (including graduate and undergraduate students).

PHASE 2: RECRUIT

Upon establishment, chapters will receive a special join code for student members. Those who use the code to join will receive all member benefits for two years. One of the goals of the ICMA Student Chapter Program is to attract students to the local government profession. Although student chapters primarily attract students in MPA programs, any student can be a member. We recommend using the following tools and events to educate others about local government and/or your student chapter:



Recruitment emails



Organizational Fairs



Promotional Videos



Flyers



Visits to classes



Schoolwide events (welcome events, gameday, celebrations, etc.)



Work with a Professor to make membership a class requirement

Submit a request for ICMA Student Chapter swag for your event [here](#).

PHASE 2: RECRUIT

Sample Recruitment Email

(Insert Greeting),

[Insert school name] is forming an ICMA Student Chapter!

ICMA is the leading association of local government professionals dedicated to creating and supporting thriving communities throughout the world. With its more than 12,000 members internationally, ICMA works to improve the lives of citizens by identifying, promoting, and speeding the adoption of leading government practices.

As members, each of our students will receive a free membership and all the benefits of ICMA membership. Those benefits include:

- Free registration for the ICMA Annual Conference
- Access to ICMA's Who's Who professional network & Job Center
- Full digital membership, including ICMA's Newsletter, PM Magazine Online, members-only files, and content (such as the Job Hunting Handbook and Leading Ideas interviews)
- Exclusive webinars and podcasts
- Mentorship from a local area government professional

In exchange for their membership, members organize events and initiatives that contribute to the growth and success of their school, city, and county communities, promote the local government profession, and offer career development and networking opportunities to future government professionals.

We believe that you could be an integral part of [insert school name]'s ICMA Student Chapter and would like to invite you to join. For more information, please contact [insert contact information].

Best Wishes

PHASE 2: RECRUIT

After recruiting new members, be sure to send them an email providing them with information about the chapter, the chapter meeting schedule, and instructions for becoming an official member of ICMA. Use the sample below to help you create your own.

Sample Welcome Email

(INSERT GREETING),

Welcome to the (INSERT SCHOOL NAME) ICMA Student Chapter!

Now that you are a member, you can attend meetings, help organize events and initiatives, and access ICMA resources. To register with our chapter please go to ICMA.org and follow the attached join instructions. Upon completing the registration process, you will receive a confirmation email and will have full access to the resources on the ICMA website. Please email me to let me know so I can keep a record of our members. This record will help with our renewal process next year.

You will now also have access to the ICMA Student Chapter Facebook Group, another excellent resource and a way to network with other student chapter members internationally. Please join and feel free to like, comment, and share as much as you would like.

I will send out an email soon with the details of our next chapter meeting. I look forward to meeting you there and discussing future chapter plans.

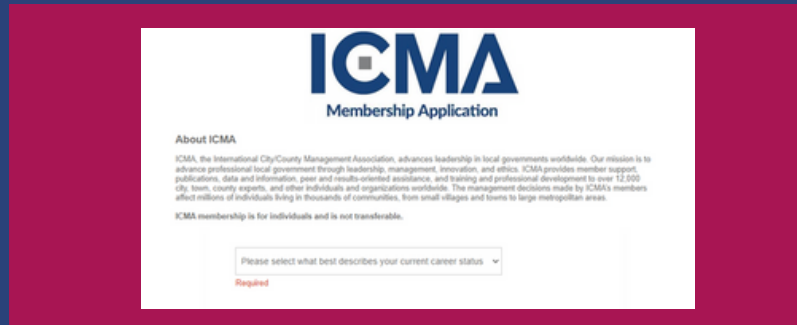
Again, Welcome. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions before the next meeting. I look forward to working with you this year.

*Best,
(INSERT NAME)*

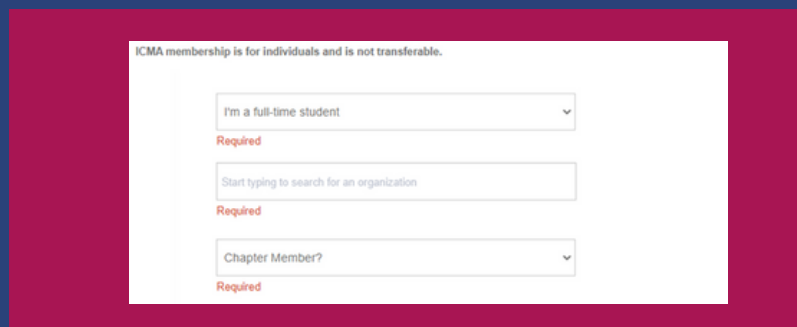
PHASE 2: RECRUIT

Join Instructions

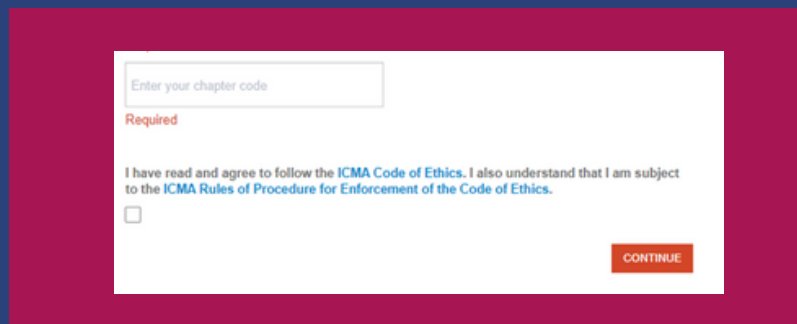
- Visit icma.org and click **Join** in top right. (If you already have an ICMA account, use it. Once you are logged in, click on **My ICMA**.)
- Scroll down and press the Red button Join ICMA Now.
- Enter your contact details.
- Then:



1. Select current career status: **I'M A FULL-TIME STUDENT**
2. Locate and select school from drop down menu (if no list start typing): **Example University**



3. Chapter Member? **YES**
4. Copy in School Code: **EXMP2024PIT**
5. Read & Agree to the ICMA Code of Ethics: **Check the box** and click **Continue**



- This page will summarize your cart transactions. If the total is not \$0.00, email careers@icma.org with details of your school and discount code. Otherwise, move to the next screen.
- The next page collects/confirms billing information. Press **Continue**.
- At the bottom of the next screen click **Submit** and you are done!

PHASE 3: MAINTENANCE

The key to successful student chapter event planning is delegation. After deciding on a specific event and/or guest speaker, be sure to divvy up the responsibilities equally among board members. Most events will require everyone's help. List out each required task and assign responsibility for each to an individual. Secure a speaker. Collaborate with like organizations. Reserve a space. Develop a social media and marketing plan. Designate a set-up/cleanup crew.

Don't be afraid to start small with events (ex: one speaker instead of a full panel) and to spend time planning a small number of well-executed events per semester instead of a large number of forgettable ones. Quantity does not outweigh quality in this case. It's all about what your chapter's board can handle and the sooner you all figure that out, the better. Below are some example events:

- Discussion panel
- Lunch and learn
- Case challenge
- Government building tour
- Group field project
- Trivia Night
- Career skills workshop
- Speed coaching
- Webinar viewings
- Public service conferences

For more events go to the next page.

BEST CHAPTER EVENT CONTEST

At the school year's end, ICMA calls out to student chapters to submit their best student chapter event. This is an opportunity for student chapters to win funds to attend the annual conference or put toward student chapter activities throughout the year. Each year three winners are chosen, and the ICMA Executive Board judges submissions. Submissions are judged on the topic of the event, the involvement, and the impact of the event.

Keep an eye out for communications in the Spring, and submit your event!

PHASE 3: MAINTENANCE

Example Events & Initiatives

Discussion Panel	Assemble a group of professionals to discuss a pressing issue in the field or in your community.	
Social/Mixer	Invite chapter members, MPA students, undergraduates, professors, etc. to socialize. Use this opportunity to do some light recruiting.	
City Manager Shadowing	Recruit city administrators in your area who are willing to allow one or more students to accompany him/her as he/she performs the duties of his/her position.	
Guest Speaker "TED Talk"	Invite academics, authors, and practitioners to give a lecture or talk on a subject in their field of expertise.	
Networking Events	Organize opportunities for chapter members to expand their networks. Invite public service workers in your area, alumni, faculty, and even chapter members from other universities. Chapters could also opt to attend networking events that have been organized by other organizations.	
Speed-Mentoring/Speed Coaching	Organize an event like speed-dating for mentees (students) and mentors (professors and practitioners) to facilitate quick meetings for career development tips.	
Career Skills Workshop/Seminar	Collaborate with your school's career services department to organize workshops or seminars geared toward skills like resume writing and interviewing.	
Case Challenge	Recruit local governments to submit challenges facing their institutions that might represent an educational opportunity for students. After selecting a case/organization, allow interested students to sign up and form teams to participate. On the day of the event, reveal the case and give the teams a pre-designated amount of time to come up with a solution. Invite local administrators to choose the winner.	
Field Trips	Plan a student chapter event to your community's water treatment plant, city hall, or library. This is a great opportunity to talk with staff who work within the department or organization as a whole about the work they do for your community.	

PHASE 3: MAINTENANCE

ICMA Student Chapters are living, breathing organizations. They need nurturing and maintenance. Use the following tips to make sure your chapter remains sustainable.

Build Chapter Sustainability



Establish an ICMA Student Chapter board. Each seat in the board should be important and duties should be established upfront. This creates buy-in among everyone on the board. Collaborative leadership will be key.

Draft a strategic plan. Some of the most successful chapters attribute that success to a commitment to a strategic plan. It may be a tedious process, but it will come in handy, especially during leadership transitions.

- Be sure the plan will get the chapter through at least one leadership transition. It will help guide the next board and will give them time to get in the swing of things before they must develop a plan of their own.
- It's okay to be ambitious in your plan, but it's important to be realistic too. Set goals that will push your chapter, but won't knock it down if they aren't achieved.

Build your chapter's relationship with its mentor. Oftentimes individuals that have agreed to mentor are active members of ICMA. Get that relationship going. You will need their advice, their connections, and their influence.

Leadership Transition is key to ensuring a smooth transition each and every year. Make sure you have a plan in place to pass the torch to the next president of your student chapter.



Build Your Chapter's Network

- **Reach out to program and chapter alumni.** Let them know you welcome any help they are willing to offer. Note: Using alumni as speakers at events is a good way to engage them and mitigate costs for the chapter. Chapters have opted to create alumni boards that advise them. These boards can be involved in the selection of board members as well.
- **Reach out to your state association.** These organizations are great resources for funding, partnerships, scholarships, ideas, etc.
- **Try to organize networking/coaching sessions with association members, chapter members, and other students in your program.**
- **Partner with chapters at other schools.** Joint initiatives and events are among some of the most successful chapter events. If you aren't located near another university with a chapter, you can always reach out for ideas and advice.



PHASE 3: MAINTENANCE



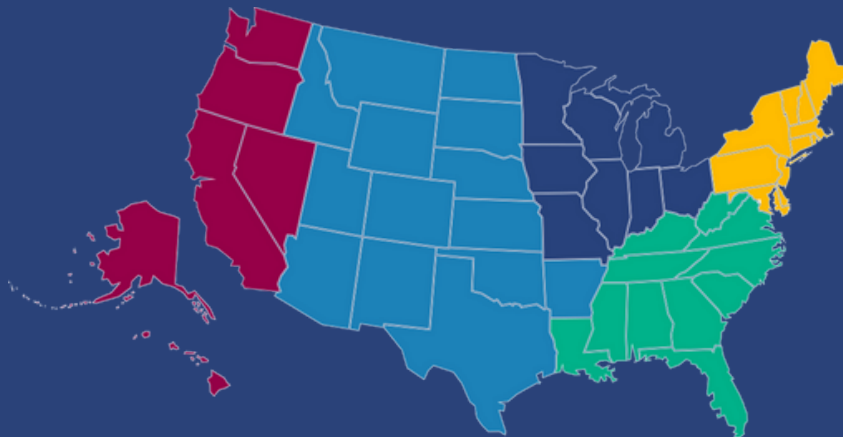
Build Your Chapter's Brand

- **Focus on the general public too.** Your student body is important, but events do not always have to be student-only and efforts do not always have to be student-focused.
- **Tap into any funds that are available to student organizations from your school.** It's free money! You can also work with your university to find out if there are any other ways to access funding for student organizations.
- **Never underestimate the power of word of mouth.** It's free. And it works. Most of your future members don't even know your chapter exists yet.
- **Find ICMA student members on campus.** Do your best to get them involved with the student chapter. Don't be afraid to use the free membership as one of your selling points.
- **Is local government management an afterthought in your program?** This is quite common. In the past, chapters have worked with the deans of their colleges to use chapter activities to fill the local government gaps in the curriculum.
- **Use topics and issues discussed in your classes as themes for panels and other events.** This is a foolproof way to get support from students in your program who are not members of the student chapter.

PHASE 3: MAINTENANCE

Strong Regional Roots

ICMA works with a number of state-based associations for local government professionals to promote the highest ethical standards of professional behavior, provide professional development opportunities, and gather and share information to city and county leaders. Contact your state's association for partnership and scholarship opportunities, information on state events, and access to some of the state's leading public administrators. If possible, try to attend state meetings and conferences. They are invaluable opportunities to network with public service professionals in your state and helps demonstrate the need for state associations to develop programming that engages upcoming professionals.



Connect with ICMA Affiliate Orgs

- [Women Leading Government](#)
- [Local Government Hispanic Network](#)
- [National Association of County Administrators](#)
- [National Forum for Black Public Administrators](#)
- [CivicPRIDE](#)
- [International Network of Asian Public Administrators](#)



You can find a [state association list](#) with links to official websites and a directory with [leadership and liaison contact information](#) on the ICMA website.

STUDENT MEMBER BENEFITS



NETWORKING

- Complimentary registration to the ICMA Annual Conference (value of \$750) held in Fall. Complimentary registration to all ICMA Reimagined Conferences (value of \$325).
- Opportunity to network in person with over 4,000+ local government professionals at the Annual Conference.
- Regional and state association network opportunities. Many state associations have annual conferences and student member rates.
- Opportunity to network and join ICMA affiliate organizations (i.e. I-NAPA, NFBPA, LGHN, WLG, CivicPride)



CONNECTIONS

- A network to connect with members and participate in discussions vital to the managing and advancing communities.
- A Student Chapter focused ICMA Connect group to connect with student members and share events. Network of 1,200+ students to connect with.
- The largest database of the local government professionals. Connect with practitioners, academics, and experts in the profession.



CAREER DEVELOPMENT

- Access to hundreds of local government positions through ICMA Job Center. Resources to assist newly appointed managers to help navigate the politics of the profession. Over 90 Career Compass articles, that discuss strategies to address career issues in local government.
- Access to one-on-one coaching with seasoned professionals through ICMA's Coach Connect platform.
- Local Government Management Fellowship (LGMF) program that gives recent graduates the opportunity work in a full-time local government position with a mentoring focus.
- Access to career focused handbooks and guides for early-career professionals entering the profession.



RESEARCH

- Access to surveys and research conducted by ICMA and partners, who are subject-matter experts and organizations whose research interests intersect with those of ICMA.
- Discounts on ICMA publications and access to member focused surveys that provide data to assist local government policies.
- Electronic subscription to Public Management (PM), access to ICMA's weekly newsletter Leadership Matters and ICMA SmartBrief.
- Access to over 5,000 online webinars, podcasts, articles, case studies, reports, and sample local government documents. Complimentary access to ICMA's webinar subscription (value of \$695).

ICMA

INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION
777 N. Capital St. NE, Ste. 500 Washington, DC 20002
202.962.3680 | 202.962.3500 (f) | icma.org