



Strategic Roadmap

2026 - 2029

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Vision

ICMA is a trusted partner, advancing professional local government and supporting practitioners dedicated to creating and sustaining thriving communities.

Organizational Mission

We deliver valuable services and resources, elevate leading practices, foster innovation, and bring together local government professionals; creating the connections that sustain the profession.

Organization Values

- Professional
- Innovative
- Collaborative
- Mission Driven; and
- Accountable



LETTER FROM THE CEO/Executive Director

Executive Board and ICMA Members,

Local government is changing quickly, and so are the needs of the communities you serve. ICMA is committed to keeping members at the center of our work and supporting you as you serve your jurisdictions. Last year, we began developing a strategic plan. We soon recognized that ICMA needed a Roadmap instead—one that provides clear direction while preserving the flexibility to respond as member needs and the environment around us continue to change.

The Strategic Roadmap's overarching framework—our vision, mission, values, and focus areas—provides durable direction. Together, these elements describe the organization we aspire to be and the commitments that will guide us over time. The framework aligns our work and holds us accountable for moving ICMA toward its vision of being experienced as a “trusted partner, advancing professional local government and supporting practitioners dedicated to creating and sustaining thriving communities.” It also defines how we will work: professionally, innovatively, collaboratively, and with members at the center, while remaining accountable for achieving the outcomes envisioned in the Roadmap.

This work builds on a strong foundation. ICMA's previous strategic plan, *Envision ICMA*, served as a North Star for the profession by giving members a meaningful voice in defining the beliefs and priorities that continue to shape professional local government. Its commitments to public service, ethics, professional management, equity and inclusion, continuous learning, stewardship, and

leadership remain foundational to the profession and to ICMA's understanding of the work our members do every day.

The new Strategic Roadmap builds on that legacy by asking a more specific organizational question: What role must ICMA play in advancing and advocating for professional local government—and in supporting the practitioners who lead at the core of thriving communities? The answer is reflected in our focus on trusted and valued member services, relational advocacy and engagement, and an aligned and sustainable organization.

The Roadmap sets our direction, and #MembersMatter gives that direction meaning. It is more than a hashtag; it is the heartbeat of ICMA. Our staff will demonstrate that promise through the choices we make and the results we deliver.

I am grateful to the members, Executive Board, staff, and others whose insights shaped this Roadmap. I look forward to working together to bring it to life.

Sincerely,

Julia D. Novak, ICMA-CM

CEO/Executive Director

International City/County Management Association

Strategic Roadmap Development Process



**Informed by
Members,
Created for
Action**

ICMA's new Strategic Roadmap represents an intentional effort to align the daily work of the organization with the evolving needs of local government leaders worldwide. While this roadmap serves primarily as an operational guide for ICMA staff to execute, every goal, strategy, and tactic is anchored in member perspectives.

The roadmap drew from many complementary sources, including feedback from more than 2,300 members from our 2025 Membership Satisfaction Survey, targeted focus groups and interviews with affiliates, state associations, staff, and other key partners, and an analysis of core institutional documents, budgets, task force studies, and prior strategic commitments such as Envision ICMA.

The process launched with the Executive Board in Fall 2025 during ICMA's Annual Conference, with interviews and focus groups taking place throughout the winter. In winter 2026, the Executive Board met to establish the core focus areas. Over the course of spring and summer 2026, ICMA's leadership team, staff, and Executive Board worked through the specific goals, outcomes, and operational tactics. The Board formally adopted the framework in summer 2026, paving the way for detailed workplanning and the official launch of the Strategic Roadmap at the 2026 Annual Conference.

Development Process by the Numbers

2,329

member responses from the 2025 Membership Satisfaction Survey establishing foundational priorities

86

stakeholders engaged across 11 focus groups and five targeted interviews

28

current and outgoing Executive Board members engaged during initial strategic sessions

13

foundational organizational reports, financial documents, and previous task force studies analyzed

12

months of collaborative development between the Executive Board and staff leadership

Framework

Vision

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We deliver valuable services and resources, elevate leading practices, foster innovation, and bring together local government professionals; *creating the connections that sustain the profession.*

Organization Values

Professional

Innovative

Collaborative

Mission Driven

Accountable

Focus Areas

TRUSTED AND VALUED MEMBER SERVICES

A

Our members turn to ICMA for connection, credibility, leading practices, programmatic resources (training, research, innovation, learning and development), recognition, and leadership opportunities.

FOCUSED AND RELATIONAL ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

B

ICMA works to advance professional local government and connects communities of interest globally to further shared interests.

ALIGNED AND SUSTAINABLE ORGANIZATION

C

ICMA is fiscally responsible and nurtures an entrepreneurial mindset that creates an agile and resilient organizational culture that produces value for members and partners.

Strategies

Strategy 1: Strengthen ICMA's position as a respected thought leader.

Strategy 2: Build a data-informed understanding of member needs to drive programming and services that deliver value.

Strategy 3: Deliver learning opportunities that meet local government professionals at every stage of their careers.

Strategy 4: Advance ICMA's Credentialed Manager program as the standard for professional management excellence.

Strategy 5: Elevate the visibility and impact of professional management practitioners through recognition and celebration.

Strategy 1: Intentionally advance professionally managed local government and build awareness of the value of professional local government.

Strategy 2: Meaningfully involve Members in a relevant and sustainable way.

Strategy 3: Cultivate relationships with mission-aligned organizations to expand ICMA's influence, credibility, and collective impact on professional local government.

Strategy 4: Develop an engaging and meaningful approach to online information sharing.

Strategy 1: Create a culture that champions innovation, collaboration, and an entrepreneurial mindset.

Strategy 2: Develop a sustainable business model that ensures a resilient organization.

Strategy 3: Evaluate and improve internal processes, policies, and systems for improved efficiency, effectiveness, and value.

Envision ICMA's Legacy

Envision ICMA, our previous strategic plan adopted in 2017, gave members a meaningful voice in shaping our direction, and its influence on this Roadmap is direct and intentional. The Core Beliefs articulated during that process remain unchanged. The table below shows how the key priorities from Envision ICMA map onto this Roadmap's Focus Areas. The focus areas and strategies have evolved to meet new realities, but the purpose at the center has not. This Roadmap is how ICMA as an organization will channel its core commitment to members.

Envision ICMA Key Priority

2026 Roadmap Focus Area

Member Benefits and Growth



Focus Area A: Trusted and Valued Member Services

Learning Community



Focus Area A (Strategy 3)

Thought Leadership and Resource Network



Focus Area A (Strategies 1 and 2)

Advocacy and Outreach



Focus Area B: Focused and Relational Advocacy and Engagement

Governance and Operations



Focus Area C: Aligned and Sustainable Organization

Core Beliefs

We believe in...

- **Public Service:** including the stewardship of democratic principles and the efficient and transparent use of public resources
- **Ethics:** as the core of professionalism in local government leadership and management as outlined in the ICMA Code of Ethics
- **Council-Manager Form of Government and Professional Management:** as the preferred local government structure
- **Equity and Inclusion:** ensuring that local governments are inclusive and mirror the diversity in communities
- **The Continuous Pursuit of Excellence:** including professional development, life-long learning, networking, capacity building, knowledge sharing, and engagement
- **Stewardship:** balancing resources including people, financial, social capital, and environmental so that communities are better than we found them
- **Leadership:** developing leadership capacity and attracting and developing future generations of leaders.

Trusted and Valued Member Services



Our members turn to ICMA for connection, credibility, leading practices, programmatic resources (training, research, innovation, learning and development), recognition, and leadership opportunities.

STRATEGY 1:

Strengthen ICMA's position as a respected thought leader.

STRATEGY 2:

Build a data-informed understanding of member needs to drive programming and services that deliver value.

STRATEGY 3:

Deliver learning opportunities that meet local government professionals at every stage of their careers.



STRATEGY 4:

Advance ICMA's Credentialed Manager program as the standard for professional management excellence.

STRATEGY 5:

Elevate the visibility and impact of professional management practitioners through recognition and celebration.

Focused and Relational Advocacy and Engagement



ICMA works to advance professional local government and connects communities of interest globally to further shared interests.

STRATEGY 1:

Intentionally advance professionally managed local government and build awareness of the value of professional local government.

STRATEGY 2:

Meaningfully involve Members in a relevant and sustainable way.



STRATEGY 3:

Cultivate relationships with mission-aligned organizations to expand ICMA's influence, credibility, and collective impact on professional local government.

STRATEGY 4:

Develop an engaging and meaningful approach to online information sharing.

Aligned and Sustainable Organization



ICMA is fiscally responsible and nurtures an entrepreneurial mindset that creates an agile and resilient organizational culture that produces value for members and partners.

STRATEGY 1:

Create a culture that champions innovation, collaboration, and an entrepreneurial mindset.

STRATEGY 2:

Develop a sustainable business model that ensures a resilient organization.



STRATEGY 3:

Evaluate and improve internal processes, policies, and systems for improved efficiency, effectiveness, and value.





Moving Forward

While the Strategic Roadmap serves primarily as an operational framework for the organization, its purpose is rooted in serving ICMA's members. Building on the foundation of Envision ICMA, this plan connects daily operations directly to the core belief of the association: local government professionals are leaders at the core of thriving communities, and ICMA staff exist to create the connections that sustain the profession.

To ensure sustained progress and agility, implementation will be guided by an ongoing annual planning cycle between the Executive Board and our staff leadership team. Through continuous progress reviews, tracking and implementation software, annual budget alignment, and regular course corrections, leadership will iteratively assess progress to ensure organizational resources remain responsive to member needs.



In addition to the many members, staff members, and partners who contributed to this effort, we want to extend a special thank you to the 2025-2026 Executive Board for their vision and leadership in shaping this strategic roadmap and guiding the organization's future.

FIRST ROW:

Sereniah M. Breland, City Manager, Pflugerville, Texas (Vice President, Mountain Plains Region)
Cindy Steinhauer, Deputy City Manager, Rochester, Minnesota (Vice President, Midwest Region)
Pam Davis, Assistant City Manager, Boulder, Colorado (Vice President, Mountain Plains Region)
Tanya Ange, County Administrator, Washington County, Oregon (Past President)
Michael Land, City Manager, Coppell, Texas (President)
Elisa C. Cox, Assistant City Manager, Rancho Cucamonga, California (Vice President, West Coast Region)
Brandon J. Ford, Assistant Township Manager, Lower Merion Township, Pennsylvania (Vice President, Northeast Region)
Penny Postoak Ferguson, County Manager, Johnson County, Kansas (Vice President, Mountain Plains Region)
Cori Burbach, Assistant City Manager, Dubuque, Iowa (Vice President, Midwest Region)
Kristy Rogers, Town Manager, Milton, Delaware (Vice President, Northeast Region)
Katie Koester, City Manager, Juneau, Alaska (Vice President, West Coast Region)
Nat Rojanasathira, Assistant City Manager, City of Monterey, California (Vice President, West Coast Region)

SECOND ROW:

Steve Bartha, Town Manager, Lexington, Massachusetts (Vice President, Northeast Region)
Jānis Lange, Chief Executive Officer, Riga City Municipality, Latvia (Vice President, International Region)
Lungile Dlamini, Chief Executive Officer, Municipal Council of Manzini, Eswatini (Vice President, International Region)
Julia D. Novak, Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
Andy Pederson, Village Manager, Bayside, Wisconsin (President-Elect)
Eric Stuckey, City Manager, Franklin, Tennessee (Vice President, Southeast Region)
Jeff Weckbach, Township Administrator, Colerain Township, Ohio (Vice President, Midwest Region)
Justin Smith, Assistant City Manager, Pelham, Alabama (Vice President, Southeast Region)
Chelsea K. Jackson, Deputy City Manager, Douglasville, Georgia (Vice President, Southeast Region)
Meighan Wark, Chief Administrative Officer, Huron County, Ontario, Canada (Vice President, International Region)



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