



Local Government Management Fellowship Ideas for Local Governments and Tips for Finalists and Fellows

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In gratitude for this fellowship opportunity and as a way to give back to the LGMF program, the 2005 Local Government Management Fellows created the following document for local governments and future Fellows. For local governments, it provides ideas on structuring the fellowship and identifying projects. For Fellows, it provides tips on how to make the most of the experience.

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How Will it Work?—Structure

There are many ways to structure a Local Government Management Fellowship (LGMF). The following is a description of some of the options. Each option has advantages and disadvantages for the organization and for the Fellow. It is important to explain the structure to the Fellow in the selection process and to consider whether the structure and the Fellow are a good match.

1. Specialization

The Fellow spends the entire year in a particular department, e.g. Office of Emergency Management, City Manager's Office.

2. Rotation

In the course of a year, the Fellow rotates through specific departments. Typically, the Fellow goes through four three-month rotations within the City, with one of the four rotations being in the City/County Manager's Office. Other rotations may include capital improvements, finance, human resources, and departments chosen by the Fellow. For an example of how to integrate goals and rotational areas, please see Appendix A. For an example of a form departments can use to request a Fellow, see Appendix B.

Some municipalities require departments to pay for the Fellow's services from their own budget. This helps to make sure departments have a specific project for the Fellow and that there is an expected tangible work product at the end of the three-month rotation.

3. Loosely-organized rotation

This option provides some structure but also allows for flexibility. The Fellow is assigned to general areas and also assigned to projects as needed. For example, the Fellow may be assigned to the Manager's office part-time and a department that needs management assistance part-time. Or, the Fellow may be assigned to rotate through functional areas such as general city/county administration, growth management and the environment, health and human services, and strategic organizational improvement yet still be assigned projects outside of these areas.

4. Project-based

Fellows are assigned projects and move around as needed. Ideally, some projects match the Fellow's interests. Projects can be identified during the interview process. Fellows may be loosely affiliated with several departments at one time.

Essential Components

Fellows have found the following components contribute to a successful experience:

- Goals that both the Fellow and employer hope to accomplish, preferably discussed before the Fellow arrives.
- Introduction of the Fellow and description of the fellowship purpose to department heads, elected officials, staff, and community leaders. This includes a deliberate and conscious distinction and discussion about the duties of a Fellow versus the duties of an intern.
- Continuous mentoring with follow-up by one individual (preferably the County/City Manager or another prominent manager such as the assistant manager or an experienced department head), at least once a month, if not more.
- Attendance at senior management meetings, advances/retreats, etc.
- Attendance at council/commissioner meetings, citizen groups, etc. to gain exposure to elected officials and citizens.
- Professional development opportunities- conferences, training, networking.
- Practical, management-level projects that give Fellows insights into what it means to be a manager.

What Fellows Can Do for You—Projects, Projects, Projects

Deciding on projects is a key step that will influence the rest of the experience. There are many ways to do this. Here's an example of one process that works for project selection:

“During the interview, I discussed my interests within government work and after selected, the County Administrator and I created a list of potential areas for projects. From there, the County Administrator asked the departments to brainstorm projects that would be educational, challenging, and rewarding. I received the compilation of potential projects during my first week and then met with each department that had proposed a project. After meeting with the department heads, the County Administrator and I selected four major projects.”

Fellows can work on a variety of projects that contribute to the organization. The following table lists examples of projects Fellows have been assigned in the past. Fellows are interested in management and should be given management-level assignments as part of their workload.

Sample projects

<p>Produce a strategic plan year end report for the Manager</p> <p>Research and recommend design and content of internal newsletter provided for the Board of County Commissioners by the Manager's Office</p> <p>Build collaborative steering committees and workgroups to gain community support for a Diversity Strategic Plan for the organization</p> <p>Analyze best practices for and develop a Customer Relations Management System and protocols for responding to citizen requests/complaints</p> <p>Develop City/County Code of Ethics</p> <p>Write a grant for a City day care center across 3-4 departments</p> <p>Design an asset management system for the Parks and Recreation Department</p> <p>Assist the city to develop citizen-centered performance measures</p> <p>Work with the Community Development Agency (CDA) to coordinate efforts in building affordable housing</p> <p>Work with county initiative Criminal Justice Information Integration Network (CJIIN) to help improve police agency practices through technology</p> <p>Coordinate the Department of Defense's new Smart Card initiative and its implementation to emergency responders</p> <p>Participate in creating a countywide joint dispatch center</p> <p>Provide management analyst support for FY2006 Program Review, based on the federal government's PART system</p> <p>Research models and recommend key policy considerations and restructuring actions for the Buildings and Grounds Maintenance Division</p> <p>Draft an annual update to the city's Economic Development Strategy, reporting on the accomplishments of all the departments' programs related to the strategy</p>	<p>Serve as a budget analyst; assist in budget process</p> <p>Convert the budget to GFOA presentation format</p> <p>Develop and implement a Citizens' Academy</p> <p>Develop a firefighter recruitment strategy to diversify the applicant pool; assist in recruitment through partnership with the NAACP</p> <p>Coordinate the hiring process for 911 dispatchers</p> <p>Work with Employee Relations in researching the possibility for use of Flex Leave as an incentive during the hiring process</p> <p>Research and recommend best financial practices for medical and dental self-insurance by local governments</p> <p>Provide research for human resources classification and compensation study</p> <p>Organize signage for a citywide celebration</p> <p>Investigate the leasing possibilities for a parcel of city-owned land near the airport</p> <p>Develop an RFP for a capital project</p> <p>Facilitate an emerging leaders group and organization-wide book club</p> <p>Conduct assessment of housing needs of seniors and people with disabilities</p> <p>Provide logistical support for new Minority, Women's and Small Business Enterprises Program</p> <p>Help to design a County mentoring program</p> <p><u>Outside activities</u></p> <p>Speak at an HR-IPMA conference panel on Generational Diversity</p> <p>Join the board of a local non-profit agency to gain experience in fundraising and for networking opportunities</p> <p>Serve as examiner for the Governor's State Quality Awards Program that is based on the Federal Baldrige Award</p>
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From Fellows to Fellows: Tips for Making the Most of Your Experience

The application process

Ask questions. Feel free to email the LGMF program coordinator with questions and to check to see if your application has been received.

*Research each city/county **BEFORE the interview.*** Go online to local newspapers and the city's website to learn about the budget, demographics, current issues, etc.

Ask the LGMF program coordinator for the work plan the host city had to submit in order to be considered and selected as a LGMF City. This document will give a concise overview of what the host government expects and has planned for its future Fellow.

Speak from the heart when preparing essays.

Have at least three good questions to ask your interviewers.

On the job

Set some personal learning goals for the year and revisit/revise these throughout the Fellowship.

Research, research, research. Nothing is more important than taking the initial time to understand the entity's structure, responsibilities, functions, geography, etc. Maintain a broad-based view of the organization, and learn its influence in the community as a whole. Identify key staff and managers who are willing to expose you to their area of expertise. Make time to arrange informational interviews and identify your mentor.

Don't be afraid to say which projects/departments you are interested in. Know your goals and incorporate them into projects. Volunteer to take on responsibilities dealing with your issues of interest. This is the only way that your supervisors and co-workers will learn what you are passionate about. Request opportunities to work on projects that are useful to a manager and require a manager's insight.

If you have a choice in where you are placed, secure a strong supervisor who holds clout in the Department and is willing to mentor a Fellow. A supervisor who is well-respected will be a strong role model with the ability to expose a Fellow to meetings and key projects as part of their learning and development. Also, a good supervisor understands that you are a "management" fellow and wants you

to be exposed to the management of the department (staff and project management) by including you in appropriate meetings.

Don't be afraid to ask for time with the Manager/Administrator. The fellowship is a chance to learn about a future career and one cannot understand the Manager/Administrator position if this interaction is missing.

The experience is what you make of it. Have a positive attitude, be patient, and stay dedicated to making your time well spent at every opportunity.

Remember that making your supervisor look good is a win for you.

Get to know your supervisor and his/her preferred way of doing things. Your supervisor may prefer updates in a narrative format whereas you prefer concise bullet points. Use the Fellowship as an opportunity to observe and try different styles to help you learn which you prefer.

Build relationships. Ask people to go out for lunch. People feel much more comfortable talking honestly when they are not in the office. When you first start, go to people's offices when you have questions, don't just send an email. This is another opportunity to introduce yourself. Have meetings on others' turf when possible to learn about their work context. Get to know employees at all levels of the organization.

Get involved in the community and organizational activities. This will help you to understand your government and its perception by the public. This also provides networking opportunities. In addition, try to attend as many state, county, city, community, department, committee, and commission meetings, retreats, events as possible.

In any para-military (police and fire dept) environment, do the task first (no matter how menial). If you have any concerns, raise them after completion.

Have confidence in your abilities and instincts. Sometimes you will be faced with situations where you do not know what to do or say for fear of making a mistake. Put those fears out of your mind and act like you know what you are doing, using your instincts and relying on what you have learned, and make a decision. When you make a bad decision – and it will happen – don't dwell on it. Admit fault, take whatever criticism you receive, apologize if necessary, make your reasoning known, thank them for pointing out your mistake, and move on to the next decision.

Have a customer service attitude. Respect citizens and internal employees and their background in dealing with your organization, however different from your own it may be. Listen to them and let them know you have heard them by empathizing with them in a neutral way, remembering that you represent the

organization/your department/etc. Go out of your way to be helpful to them, and move on to helping the next person.

Seek and continue requesting feedback on your performance from supervisors. Although supervisors may be slow in providing feedback, it is hard to know if you are doing a good job or what you need to improve if such conversations do not take place. Engage your supervisor in periodic discussions of your progress with projects and management style.

Encourage your supervisor and other senior staff to translate organizational/departmental culture and politics for you. Fill in the blanks on how your project or presence may be perceived if presented a certain way. For example: It may incite feelings of resentment if while working on program for employees, you do not include them in the process of the program's development. You do not want to be blindsided while trying to complete a project. Ask for the context of the project/assignments you are given.

Take initiative on projects. If things are not clear, ask questions! If your direct supervisor does not understand your project, then seek out other people in the department who have expertise or interest in your project and ask them for guidance. Be humble. Asking for help encourages people to remember you when something that relates to your project comes up in their own work.

Take initiative with people. For managers and staff you want to get to know better, make appointment(s) to meet or have lunch. Few people can resist someone showing interest in them; this is true even for busy people. If you need to discuss your experience, initiate a meeting with your supervisor or mentor. Sometimes people are preoccupied and forget to check in with you. It doesn't mean that they are not interested.

Take initiative to understand before jumping to conclusions. Understanding a situation before jumping to conclusions or action is a valuable skill for a manager. As a Fellow and someone new, you are in a unique position to ask a lot of questions and to gain a multi-source perspective on the organization and issues. Try to gain the full picture and to deepen your understanding.

If you want to stay on with your jurisdiction after the fellowship, make that clear. Also, doing projects for various departments may end up in a permanent job offer at the end of the year.

Appendix A.	Integrating Goals and Rotations				
Goals	Overarching Projects	Timeline	Rotational Area	Projects	Involved Depts.
<p>To gain supervisor training and learn what leadership competencies a manager needs.</p> <p>To broaden knowledge of the budget process, the statutory requirements for county budgets, the variety of financing tools and structures, and how municipal tools affect our revenue streams.</p> <p>To gain skills on management hot topics (i.e., High Performing Organizations) and how to best structure a department/program for efficiency and optimal effectiveness.</p> <p>To continually earn the respect of colleagues and leaders in the organization while becoming an asset to the future of the organization.</p>	Develop and implement a Diversity Strategic Plan	Jul. – Sept.	Overview of the organization & Manager's Office	Various public information projects (Town Hall, Press releases, Commissioner speech, Emergency Plan)	Manager's Office, Most all depts. (HR, Labor, Health, IT, Social Svce, Public Guardian, Sheriffs, Emergency Mgmt, Recorder, Bldg & Safety)
	Develop and implement Employee Commuter Solutions			Strategic planning	
	Customer Relations Mgmt. System	Oct. – Dec.	Capital Improvements	Capital Improvement Projects Process Decision, Funding, Construction	Budget Public Works
	Assist in the Budget process	Jan. – Mar.	Social service area	Strategic alignment of staff resources in Child Protective Services	Social Services
Work on consolidation of Courts systems (county/city)	Improve their internship program for social worker recruitment			Senior Service Public Guardian	
Develop and implement a Citizens' Academy	Apr. – Jun.	Financial Prioritization and organization	“Charting Our Course-planning for Our Future”: A Pilot program to develop a model for how to prioritize programs and funding.	Finance Parks and Open space Other departments in pilot program	

Appendix B. ICMA Fellowship Rotation Request

WHAT: [Insert jurisdiction] is host to a Local Government Management Fellowship Fellow through the International City/County Management Association. Semifinalists were selected first by ICMA through a rigorous application process amongst over 90 candidates, and subsequently interviewed and selected by host the governments that chose them out of those semifinalists. Each Fellow had to demonstrate his/her qualifications, abilities, and experience, and have a Masters in Public Administration or Public Affairs.

This year is the second year of the LGMF program, with sixteen fellows hosted by 14 communities throughout the United States. Our management fellow has a unique background [insert personal information here about work experience areas, course topics], to name a few and is ready to tackle even the unfamiliar to benefit the organization.

PURPOSE: The fellowship program is intended to provide to the Fellow management-level experience, mentorship and exposure to the inner-workings of local government, and to benefit the organization by assisting with programs or projects that your department would like to complete, start or develop but lack adequate staff or resources to do so.

Our management Fellow will continue working on several overarching projects that will span the course of the year while rotating through a management area to assist your department. Since this fellowship is only a yearlong, time and projects must be scheduled appropriately to match your department's goals and its other activities, and to allow for other rotations for the Fellow. Thus, we ask that you select the projects that are significant enough for these purposes, and goals that can be completed within the rotation (3 to 4 months) in the next nine months.

Some examples of Fellow projects include:

- Developing an RFP for a capital project
- Editing, reviewing, and critiquing various RFQ's and commissioner memos
- Develop a Departmental Strategic Plan
- Strategic alignment of staff resources in Child Protective Services
- Develop a better internship program for social worker recruitment
- Conducting assessment of housing needs of seniors and people with disabilities
- Designing an asset management system for a Parks and Rec. Department
- Investigating the leasing possibilities for a parcel of county-owned land
- Providing logistical support for new minority, women's and small business program
- Provide management analyst support for FY 2006 Program Review
- Working with the governing body on a template and the decision to fund a local private agency

Name and Title: _____
Department: _____
Today's Date: _____

Please Submit to the Fellow at [\[insert email address\]](#) by [\[insert date\]](#)

1. With which specific project would the Fellow be involved?
2. Overall, how do you plan to structure the project? When do you estimate the completion of the project?
3. What role do you see the Fellow fulfilling?
4. What are some of the goals that you have for the project, and how long do you expect for the accomplishment of those goals?
5. Which staff would the Fellow work with and what would be their relationship?