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LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW
Putting Research Into Practice

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In the tradition of *The Municipal Year Book,* **LGR: Local Government Review**—a special section of *Public Management (PM)*—will present key research findings and expert insights about local government issues and trends. This is the first in what we anticipate being a series of LGR special sections.

LGR: Local Government Review offers informative and relevant articles with thoughtful takeaways. This collection of brief articles provides clear explanations and useful observations on matters of importance to local government professionals. **LGR: Local Government Review** will be published as new research findings and analyses become available. ICMA's intent is to contribute to the profession's collective understanding of practices, policies, and trends that have a significant impact on local governments, now and with an eye toward the future.

LGR: Local Government Review is offered to ICMA members as a benefit of membership. Non-ICMA members will be able to purchase e-copies of this special section from ICMA's online bookstore for $46 as of December 15, 2016.

BY ROBERT J. O'NEILL, JR.

LEADING RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

in a Changing Environment

Local governments have never been more important

Given the fiscal challenges and political dysfunction of the federal government and many states, communities will need to decide what is important and how to pay for it. At the center of those discussions and decisions will be local elected and appointed officials.

The issues that matter most to people—jobs, safety, education, the environment, healthcare, and infrastructure—present distinct challenges for local elected officials and city, town, and county managers and their staffs.[1] These issues will require: (1) multi-sector, multijurisdictional, and multi-disciplinary strategies,[2] (2) unprecedented regional cooperation to achieve the scale required to produce the outcomes we want,[3] and (3) the ability to "bridge the gap" between what is administratively effective and produces the results we desire and what is politically feasible in today's highly charged political environment.[4]

The discussion about ways to bridge the gap is more relevant now than ever. Failure to make the connection between what is politically feasible and administratively sustainable results in poorly addressed public concerns and ineffective service delivery, which in turn leads to a lack of trust and legitimacy in government,[5] two elements that

NOTE: The genesis of this article was a previous work, "Contemporary Challenges in Local Government: Evolving Roles and Responsibilities, Structures, and Processes," which was co-authored by John Nalbandian, Robert O'Neill, J. M. Wilkes, and Amanda Kaufman. The original article was published in the American Society for Public Administration's *Public Administration Review* in July|August 2013.

TAKEAWAYS

Local governments can no longer afford to operate independently. Many services that were previously managed by the states, such as transportation, will need to be handled on a regional basis. Traditional jurisdictional boundaries will no longer apply, although this can run counter to a community's desire to retain its sense of place.

Appointed managers are stewards of important democratic processes, but results matter, and local government leaders must give equal consideration to these two leadership goals.

Our challenge is to develop powerful stories that relate to the hard data and create the emotional connection that enables organizations to get things done and change behaviors.

are crucial to public sector currency in the 21st century. As we discovered during the 2016 presidential campaign, trustworthiness is an attribute highly valued by voters. It is the engine that moves government at all levels forward.

But the connection between the politics and administration of governance is complicated by two widespread and often conflicting global trends: administrative modernization and what we call "the politics of identity."[6] While professional managers are committed to effective and efficient service delivery and to helping build community through partnerships with elected officials and community engagement, the tension between the standardization and centralization of public administration versus the desire to brand communities as unique threatens to widen rather than close the gap between what a community wants and what is realistically sustainable.[7]

The situation is further complicated by the fact that appointed managers, once considered the primary purveyors of community expertise, now operate in an "open source" environment in which expertise can and often must come from a number of sources and not just from traditional local government structures.[8] The role that these trends play in shaping the way in which resilient communities must be led in the future is worth examining.

Trend 1: Administrative Modernization/Globalization

The modernization and subsequent globalization of public administration is the result of a series of disruptive revolutions—in communications; transportation; economics; and organizational authority, influence, and power—that create more administrative homogeneity throughout the world.[9]

In the face of these disruptions, we look to standardization (or fewer variations) and centralization backed by evidence-based best practices to produce high-quality efficiency while controlling costs.[10] When confidently understood and applied, hard data drive out soft data, and local government leaders and their staffs can use this hard data to measure, manage, and improve systems.[11] The availability of factual and useful information has never been more prevalent than it is today. At the same time, standardization and evidence-based best practices challenge what is spontaneous, unique, and experiential as sources of variation.[12]

Trend 2: The Politics of Identity

In contrast to the homogeneity created by the modernization and globalization of public administration are "the politics of identity," or the desire to create a sense of place within our communities.[13] Today we see residents, businesses, and public agencies working together to brand or convey the "story" of their city, town, or county and to value and celebrate its uniqueness.[14] These attempts to differentiate one's community from another and to carve out a separate identity often work against the standardization and centralization we rely upon to achieve administrative efficiency.

Getting to Scale

Achieving scale is another key issue to consider when attempting to bridge the gap created by the opposing forces of modernization/globalization and the preservation of community identity. A challenge unique to the United States is that we have many metropolitan areas that are not dominated by a single jurisdiction. In most U.S. metropolitan areas, literally hundreds of independent jurisdictions and special authorities must come together to achieve the kinds of results that are needed to ensure their future resiliency and sustainability.[15]

So how do we achieve the level of scale needed to tackle the big issues facing our communities while protecting the political identity or sense of place that we all value? How do we build a platform that is supported by the work of local government professionals—city, town, and county managers and their staffs—and that provides a level of political comfort in which elected leaders can make the type of policy decisions that transcend individual boundaries to benefit everyone in every region?[16]

By its definition, administrative modernization requires more enhanced analytical capacity and more data, which ultimately reveals more complexity.[17] But that complexity can be undermined by the overly simplistic "themes and symbols"— often grounded in "an idyllic sense of past dominated by images of 'the way we never were'"— that politicians and brand managers use to weave their political stories and campaigns.[18]

While appointed managers and their staff use data and analysis to achieve administrative sustainability, the goal of many elected officials is to achieve what is politically acceptable within the "often emotional context of community identity,"[19] thus widening, rather than bridging the gap between the two objectives. Because connecting these two goals is essential for effective governance,[20] appointed managers must be prepared to tackle this new set of leadership challenges with a new set of leadership skills and abilities.

Future Leadership Challenges

Public administrators face three fundamental leadership challenges that are associated with bridging the gap between administrative sustainability and political acceptability.[21] These are:

1. **Assuming the role of "bridge builder."** In the future, city, town, and county managers are likely to spend more time facilitating discussions among elected officials and other community members and less time translating political thinking into administrative action for staff.[22] This change in leadership style necessarily dictates that department heads, who previously were rewarded for how efficiently and effectively they ran their departments, will now be expected

to move into the gap to "understand, respect, and contribute to the concept of 'political acceptability.'"[23] Dramatic changes will take place within the roles and responsibilities of the manager and her or his administrative staff, who will need to broaden their thinking and focus on common public problems with an interdisciplinary, interdepartmental approach that may go beyond the local government organization to include a network of entities and agencies.[24]

2. **Finding ways to synchronize local government responses to problems while maintaining and valuing networks, collaborative relationships, and newly acquired skills.** Because the scope of the problems faced by local governments—economic development, transportation, the environment, and land use in metropolitan areas, for example—can exceed the capacity and authority of any one jurisdiction,[25] addressing these problems often requires a multidisciplinary and multisector approach.[26] Local governments can no longer afford to operate independently. Many services that were previously managed by the states, such as transportation, will need to be handled on a regional basis. Traditional jurisdictional boundaries will no longer apply, although this can run counter to a community's desire to retain its sense of place and distinguish itself from its regional neighbors.[27]

3. **Ensuring that the results of collaborative efforts in a networked environment are aligned with public and democratic values.** Through integrated resident engagement, local leaders must routinely "connect the issue-specific and passionate views of advocates" with the existing processes of the traditional government structures and such democratic ideals as representation, efficiency, social equity, and individual rights.[28] The rise of the Internet and social media exacerbate this challenge. While these new forms of information gathering and communication can enhance resident education and engagement, they can also undermine the dissemination of evidence-based data and provide a breeding ground for "niche-specific" comments/feedback from residents who fail to see the larger picture.[29]

Future Leadership Attributes

Without diminishing the importance of what has gone before, we can safely say that given the environment described above, the management skills and organizational systems we've developed over the past century will be prerequisite but not sufficient to address the challenges of 21st century local government.[30] What *will* be sufficient is a type of innovative thinking that requires local leaders to

1. ***Balance engagement with achieving results.*** American diplomat, educator, and author Harlan Cleveland, who was also former dean of Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs[31] and a mentor of mine, used to say that the value proposition for managers and their staffs will be "how do you get everyone in on the act and still get action?"[32] Appointed managers are stewards of important democratic processes, but results matter, and local government leaders must give equal consideration to these two leadership goals.

2. ***Bring together disparate constituencies.*** According to the work of Peter Drucker [33] and Daniel Pink,[34] the quintessential skill of the 21st century will be the ability to bring together multiple and often diverse disciplines, sectors, and stakeholders so that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. Like a conductor in a symphony, we will need to orchestrate the work of an entire network of actors—private, public, and nonprofit—over whom we have little or no control—in an entirely different way.[35]

3. ***Tell stories.*** We know from numerous scientific studies that the human brain is hardwired to need stories, not logic and data.[36] Stories are a part of us from birth, and their logic aligns with how we naturally think.[37] Our challenge is to develop powerful stories that relate to the hard data and create the emotional connection that enables organizations to get things done and change behaviors.

4. ***Become right-brained.*** Daniel Pink also wrote that every 21st century leader must rely on the classic, whole-minded aptitude of design literacy.[38] Pink is not suggesting that all local leaders become graphic artists but that every community challenge has significant design implications, so whether it's building a public hearing space, launching a new website, or developing or refining a process, design matters, and the outcome will often be determined by the quality of the design.[39]

5. ***Work small to achieve the large vision.*** Business and management author Jim Collins and others describe the role that the "incremental revolutionary" plays in moving things forward.[40] Local governments exist in a highly diffused power system in which often no one person or group has enough power to make something happen, but very often many have enough power to stop something. The "incremental revolutionary" focuses on achieving small victories that build the momentum necessary to ultimately achieve a broad vision.[41]

Looking to the Future

Addressing the widening gap between what is politically feasible and administratively sustainable is a prerequisite for successful and effective governance. Increasingly, management as we knew it during the first 100 years of professional local government management will be insuf-

ficient to address the gap. Instead, in this open-source environment in which massive amounts of data and information are available both inside and outside traditional local government structures, we will need to think differently about the roles, responsibilities, and processes that contribute to policy and decision making.

Thinking differently about local governance will require appointed leaders to focus on working with elected officials and engaging community stakeholders to ensure that everyone is on the same page. It will also require managers to develop the kind of leadership skills and initiatives that will allow them to navigate structural boundaries and look for networked solutions to regional, metropolitan, and even global challenges rather than myopically addressing only community-specific issues.

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ENDNOTES

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BY GEORGE C. HOMSY, MILDRED E. WARNER, AND LU LIAO

SUSTAINABILITY
and Local Governments:
Planning Helps Balance Environmental, Economic, and Social Equity Priorities

Local governments can be laboratories for innovation on many issues, such as sustainability, which are complex and raise concerns of environmental protection, social equity, and economic development. In government, as in business, this triple-bottom-line approach requires planning and acting beyond typical departmental and jurisdictional silos. ICMA's *2015 Local Government Sustainability Practices Survey* sought to measure actions, drivers of action, and ways that municipalities and counties measure progress on sustainability.[1]

The survey reveals that the economy remains a primary concern of local governments. However, many local governments now recognize the important role that environmental protection plays in establishing a foundation for both short- and long-term economic development. Unfortunately, the survey also shows that attention to sustainability's third dimension, social equity, lags behind. Sustainability requires that local governments give attention to all three legs of the sustainability stool – economic development, environmental sustainability, and social equity.

The survey finds interesting ways in which some communities link environmental protection and economic development. For example, more than 71% of survey respondents report that the potential to attract development projects is a significant or very significant factor motivating sustainability efforts. The potential for fiscal

TAKEAWAYS

ICMA's sustainability survey indicates that many local governments now recognize the important role that environmental protection plays in establishing a foundation for both short- and long-term economic development. Funding and economic development drive sustainability, and lack of funding is the number one barrier to sustainability.

The survey also shows that attention to sustainability's third dimension, social equity, lags behind. Higher inclusion of social equity concerns in disaster planning may provide a template for integrating social equity issues more effectively into sustainability plans.

The survey also found that local governments seem to learn best from each other.

savings from actions such as energy conservation motivate 82% of respondents. These communities find co-benefits of economic development in environmental protection.

This economic link is how many local governments justify putting environmental protection on their local agenda.[2] However, the survey finds room for improvement. Only 68% of local governments list environmental concerns as a significant motivator for sustainability, and social equity concerns only motivate 39% of responding municipalities. Less than one-third of local governments have adopted a sustainability plan, but many act without a plan. The survey shows that the most effort on sustainability occurs in energy conservation in local government operations, where savings on power bills can translate into savings for the municipality. Recycling is also common.

The 2015 Local Government Sustainability Practices Survey was sent to 8,562 municipalities, townships, and counties. This included all counties (3,031), all municipalities and townships over 25,000 in population (1,889), and a one in 2.5 sample of municipalities and townships from 2,500 to 25,000 population (3,642). The overall response rate was 22.2%, with 1,899 governments (14% of counties, 31% of cities, and 19% of towns) in the final sample.

See Table 1 for the response rates of various local government categories. The highest response rate was from the West region, and the lowest was from the South Central. Every state is represented in the sample, with California cities returning the most surveys. We also find the highest response rate from principal cities in metropolitan areas, and the lowest rate from non-metropolitan communities.[3]

Sustainability Planning

Only 31% of local governments have adopted a sustainability plan. Nearly half (47%) of metro core communities report adopting such plans, but only 28% of suburbs and 28% of rural communities did. Larger places also adopt plans at a higher rate than smaller places, with locales under 25,000 in population size adopting plans at half the rate of those over 100,000 in population size.

Economic development. Local governments that adopted sustainability plans do a better job balancing the priorities represented by three legs of the sustainability stool. Across all survey respondents, the vast majority (91%) chose economic development as a priority for their community, with 47% choosing environmental protection and 26% choosing social equity. As shown in Figure 1, more than twice as many communities with a sustainability plan prioritized environmental protection compared to those without a sustainability plan. Similarly, just over three times as many with a plan than without considered social equity a priority. Even economic development is impacted, as more communities with plans consider it a priority than do places without plans.

Plan goals. For those with a sustainability plan, the survey also asked about its contents. As expected, the top priorities focus on economic development (with 68% reporting its inclusion), energy conservation (60%), and

TABLE 1 ‖ Response Rate of 2015 ICMA Sustainability Survey			
CATEGORY	**Number Surveyed**	**Number Responding**	**Response Rate**
Total	**8,562**	**1,899**	**22.2%**
Type			
County	3,031	424	14.0%
Municipality	3,758	1,146	30.5%
Town/Township	1,773	329	18.6%
Population group			
Over 1,000,000	42	13	31.0%
500,000–1,000,000	98	24	24.5%
250,000–499,999	168	37	22.0%
100,000–249,999	532	145	27.3%
50,000–99,999	938	195	20.8%
25,000–49,999	1,641	315	19.2%
10,000–24,999	2,022	445	22.0%
5,000–9,999	1,417	346	24.4%
2,500–4,999	1,546	357	23.1%
Under 2,500	158	22	13.9%
Geographic division			
New England	528	135	25.6%
Mid-Atlantic	1,084	213	19.6%
East North-Central	2,004	398	19.9%
West North-Central	1,102	254	23.0%
South Atlantic	1,123	328	29.2%
East South-Central	586	74	12.6%
West South-Central	890	135	15.2%
Mountain	549	154	28.1%
Pacific Coast	696	208	29.9%
Geographic region			
Northeast	1,612	348	21.6%
North-Central	3,106	652	21.0%
South	2,599	537	20.7%
West	1,245	286	29.1%
Metro status			
Principal cities and counties (Metro Core)	1,032	289	28.0%
Non-principal cities and counties (Suburb)	4,328	1,034	23.9%
Non-Metropolitan (Rural)	3,202	576	18.0%

Communities without a sustainability plan
Sample size: 1,313

SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental
Protection
28%

Economic
Development
62%

Social Equity
13%

Communities with a sustainability plan
Sample size: 586

SUSTAINABILITY

Environmental
Protection
62%

Economic
Development
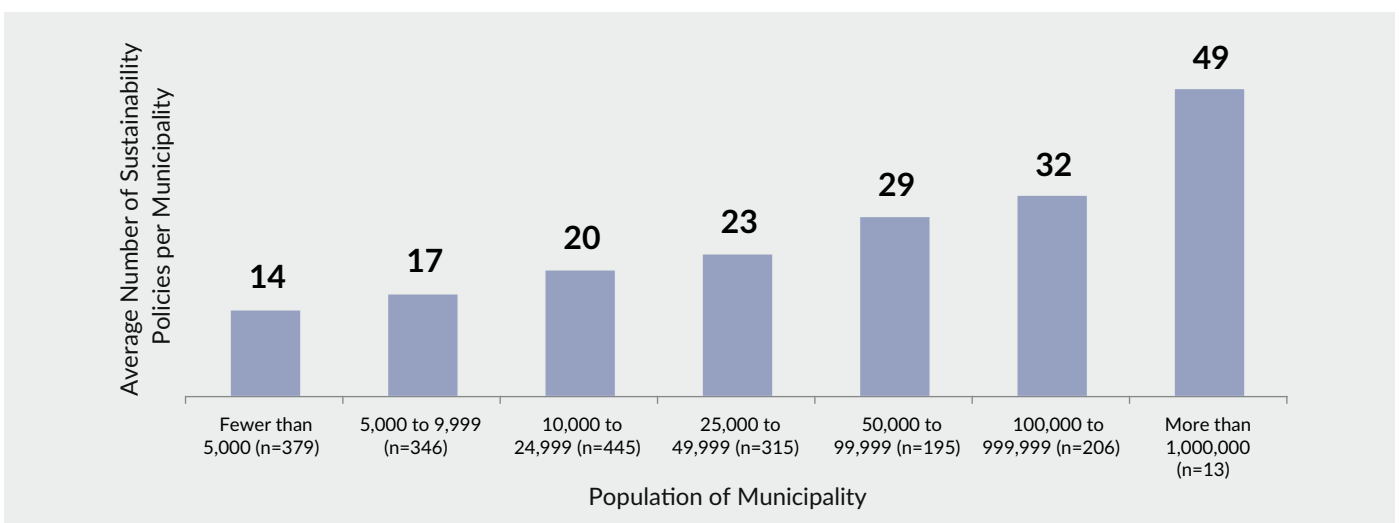**93%**

Social Equity
41%

disaster mitigation (48%). Public health (37%), green energy production (37%), community resiliency (34%), and climate change (31%) were less likely to be part of sustainability plans. Social equity (22%) was least likely to be included in sustainability plans.

Social equity in disaster planning. Disaster planning is much more common in communities than sustainability planning. The majority of respondents (87%) have a hazard mitigation or emergency evacuation plan, with two-thirds (69%) of those plans specifically addressing issues of at-risk residents (low-income populations, seniors, etc.). The higher inclusion of social equity concerns in disaster planning is likely due to federal requirements, but it may provide a template for the integration of social equity issues more effectively into sustainability plans. Seventy-six percent of governments have responded to a disaster in the past 15 years, with floods and blizzards the most commonly reported disasters.

FIGURE 2 ‖ Size of Community Matters

Average Number of Sustainability Policies per Municipality

Population of Municipality	Value
Fewer than 5,000 (n=379)	14
5,000 to 9,999 (n=346)	17
10,000 to 24,999 (n=445)	20
25,000 to 49,999 (n=315)	23
50,000 to 99,999 (n=195)	29
100,000 to 999,999 (n=206)	32
More than 1,000,000 (n=13)	49

Population of Municipality

Sustainability policies. The survey presented 82 specific sustainability policies and asked local governments to identify which ones they had adopted across seven topic areas: climate change, energy conservation, land use, water management, social supports, transportation, and waste management. On average local governments report adopting 21 sustainability policies. As shown in Figure 2, larger communities tend to adopt more policies than smaller ones. Jurisdictions of 100,000 people or more adopt about twice as many policies as the smallest category of local governments. This response to sustainability by size is similar to findings from the 2010 ICMA sustainability survey.[4]

Metro core cities and counties have on average 33 policies on their books, while suburban places average 21 and rural local governments on average report only 15 sustainability policies. Not surprisingly, local governments in the Pacific Coast geographic region (Alaska, California, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington) have adopted the most sustainability policies, with an average of 35 policies per local government. A distant second, with an average of 24 policies, was the Mountain geographic region (Arizona, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming). California cities averaged the highest (40 policies), with Nevada (33 policies per city) second.

Sustainability Actions

When policies have the potential to save local government money, the survey reveals that officials seem to adopt those more often than those policies that would benefit the community more broadly. One area in which this trend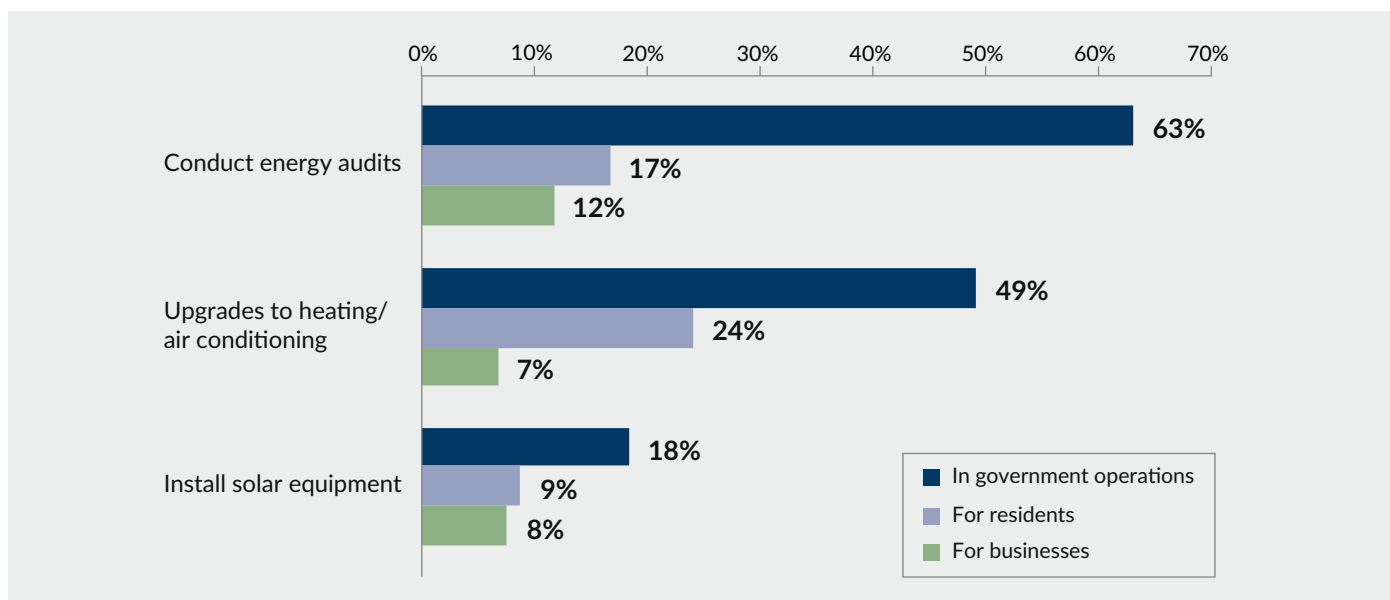 is strong is energy conservation. As shown in Figure 3, three policy actions (energy audits; upgrades to heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; and the installation of solar equipment) show the difference in effort.

Table 2 lists all of the local policies in terms of energy sustainability and illustrates the tendency of local governments to try to "green" their own operations first. In addition to saving money, acting on government operations is easier than acting on community-wide issues. Local capacity is important in instituting any program, and previous research shows that the presence of a municipal utility helps local governments spread energy conservation programs more widely across the community.[5]

Waste management. Another part of the survey asked about waste management policies. Almost two-thirds of local governments (66%) have instituted internal government recycling programs, while 57% have community-wide recycling for homes; 55% have recycling of household electronic waste; 52% have programs for recycling household hazardous waste; and 46% collect yard waste for composting. The greater parity between recycling in government operations and across the general community is probably due to top-down mandates in many states.[6] Twenty states require recycling by local governments while 47 have some kind of disposal ban, such as on electronic or hazardous waste, that makes recycling a viable option for keeping prohibited items out of landfills.

Provision of water. With the years-long drought in California and water quality issues in older, deindustrialized cities, the provision of water has become an important sustainability topic. The survey found that only 56% of local governments own their drinking water utility. Just over one-quarter (27%) use pricing to encourage water

FIGURE 3 ‖ Adoption of Energy Sustainability Policies: Government Operations Versus Countywide Efforts

Conduct energy audits: 63% (In government operations), 17% (For residents), 12% (For businesses)

Upgrades to heating/air conditioning: 49% (In government operations), 24% (For residents), 7% (For businesses)

Install solar equipment: 18% (In government operations), 9% (For residents), 8% (For businesses)

Legend:
- In government operations
- For residents
- For businesses

TABLE 2 ‖ Energy Policies in Government Operations and Communitywide

POLICIES AIMED AT GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS		COMMUNITYWIDE POLICIES	
POLICY	**Local govts adopting (%)**	**POLICY**	**Local govts adopting (%)**
Upgraded office lighting	64%	Weatherization for residences	24%
Conducted energy audits	63%	Energy audits for residences	17%
Upgraded heating / air conditioning	49%	Heating/ air cond. upgrades for residences	12%
Upgraded streetlights or other ext. lighting	45%	Energy audits - businesses	12%
Upgraded traffic signals	35%	Purchase of energy efficient appliances in residences	11%
Upgraded water or sewer system pumps	28%	Installation of solar on residences	9%
Installed solar panels	18%	Weatherization for businesses	8%
Installed electric vehicle charging stations	17%	Installation of solar on businesses	8%
Established a policy to only purchase Energy Star equipment	14%	Heating/air conditioning upgrades for businesses	7%
Established a fuel efficiency target for fleet vehicles	14%	Purchase of energy efficient appliances for businesses	6%
Required all new construction projects be certified green	9%		
Generated electricity through waste or landfill operations	8%		
Installed a geo-thermal system	8%		
Required all renovation projects be certified green	6%		

Sample size: 1,899.

conservation. Only 8% have programs to protect low-income households from water service shutoffs.

Reclaimed water. A small, but significant number of places have become creative in their reuse of water. Grey or reclaimed water is used by 14% of locales to water the landscape of public facilities, such as parks and buildings. Ten percent of local governments have provided for the reuse of grey water on the landscapes of private homes or businesses. Previous research has found communities in Washington State, Arizona, and Florida going as far as laying a second set of pipes through neighborhoods from which homeowners can draw reclaimed water for reuse on lawns.[7]

Climate change. Climate change actions garnered the lowest response from survey respondents. Only 6% of local governments have adopted a climate mitigation plan and 3% a climate adaptation plan. A greenhouse gas inventory of local government facilities and operations was conducted by 14% of respondents, with 11% setting greenhouse gas reduction targets for government operations. Only 9% have undertaken a green house gas inventory of the community, and only 7% have set targets for the entire jurisdiction.

Performance measurement. Measuring the effectiveness of any program is always a challenge for local governments.[8] One goal of this survey is to explore the ways that communities might measure their sustainability efforts. The survey asked about policy monitoring and whether the policies produce positive results in four areas: recycling, government energy conservation, community-wide energy conservation, and water conservation. As shown in Table 3, recycling has the highest rate of monitoring (45%), with 85% of those who track their program reporting that it has increased recycling rates. Just over a quarter of local governments (29%) monitor energy conservation in their own operations, with 91% of those reporting increases in energy savings.

The rate of monitoring drops for energy conservation across the community; this is a far more difficult challenge, as investor-owned utilities are often reluctant to share electricity usage data, which they may consider proprietary.[9] Still, 8% of local governments do track energy use across their jurisdiction, with 59% of those reporting success in energy conservation. Only 22% of local governments monitor the success of water conservation efforts, with 72% reporting positive results.

TABLE 3 ‖ Monitoring Sustainability

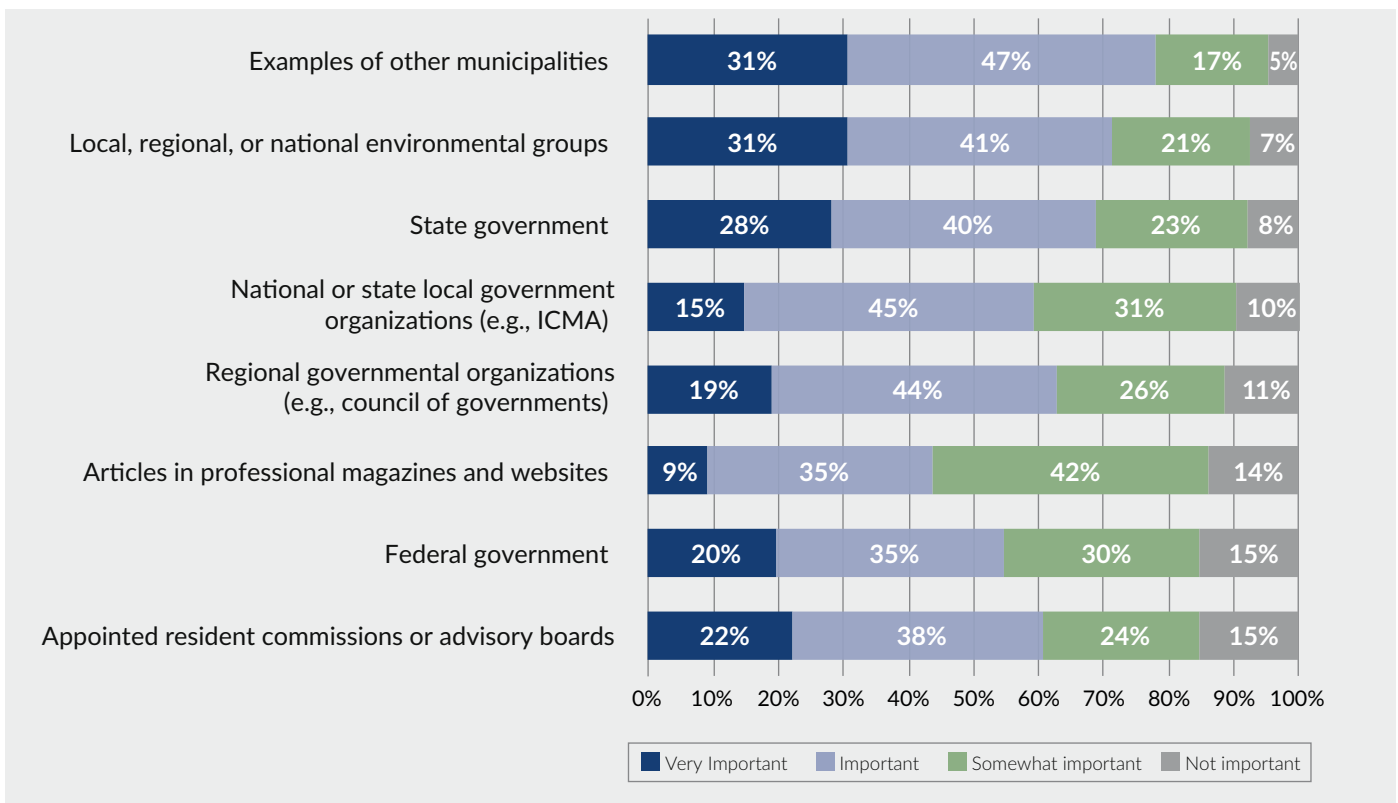| ACTION	Community Tracks	Positive Results
Recycling (n=1,811)	45%	85%
Government Energy Conservation (n=1,787)	29%	91%
Community Energy Conservation (n=1,778)	8%	59%
Water Conservation (n=1,778)	22%	72%

Sample size: 1,899.
Note that not every respondent answered every question, so raw numerical totals in each program area may vary.

Who Pushes Sustainability in a Community?

The survey examined the roles of different actors in the community—city officials and citizens. Only about one-fourth of responding governments have dedicated staffing and 19% have a dedicated budget specifically for sustainability or environmental protection. Another 9% have pulled together a sustainability task force, and 24% simply report having sustainability goals across governmental departments. The remaining 42% of respondents have no staff, no task force, or no goals addressing sustainability issues.

Impact of public engagement. Citizen participation is considered a key ingredient to the creation of sustainability plans and implementation of programs.[10] However it seems to be of limited importance to community sustainability plans, according to the officials who responded to this survey. Nearly two-thirds (59%) of the respondents indicate that public participation had little or no impact in shaping sustainability plans and strategies, while only 14% report that public participation has a lot of impact. Only 38% of respondents report that their communities have established

FIGURE 4 ‖ Rating the Importance of Different Sources of Sustainability Information

Source	Very Important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Examples of other municipalities	31%	47%	17%	5%
Local, regional, or national environmental groups	31%	41%	21%	7%
State government	28%	40%	23%	8%
National or state local government organizations (e.g., ICMA)	15%	45%	31%	10%
Regional governmental organizations (e.g., council of governments)	19%	44%	26%	11%
Articles in professional magazines and websites	9%	35%	42%	14%
Federal government	20%	35%	30%	15%
Appointed resident commissions or advisory boards	22%	38%	24%	15%

Sample size: 1,899.
Note that not every respondent answered every question, so raw numerical totals for each type of resource may vary.

resident committees, commissions, and/or task forces as a means of public participation. Despite low usage of these kinds of engagement vehicles, many studies report that appointing community members to a formal government committee or body enhances sustainability policymaking, especially in smaller and more rural communities.[11]

Sources of information. The surveys also asked about sources of sustainability information for local officials. More than three-quarters of respondents (78%) rate "examples in other municipalities" as either very important or important sources of information. If looking to other communities happens among neighbors, this understanding may help policy makers promote greater regional coordination. As shown in Figure 4, local, regional, and national environmental groups are the second most important source of information, followed by state government, and then regional governmental organizations. Appointed resident advisory boards are less important than other sources of information. Local governments, it seems, learn best from each other.

Collaboration Is One Key to Sustainability

Sustainability policies are complicated, and the issues bridge departmental boundaries within a local government as well as across municipal and county boundaries. Effective implementation requires collaboration across agencies within government and among governments in the region. The 2015 Local Government Sustainability Practices Survey asked respondents if departments within the jurisdiction coordinated on some sustainability programs. As shown in Table 4, the highest areas of interagency collaboration are in land use (91%), economic

development (85%), grant writing (85%), hazard mitigation (84%), and storm water management (82%). Climate change mitigation and adaptation rank lowest, possibly because localities are still figuring out how to address these global challenges. Most municipalities do not have climate change policies.

Regional coordination is highest in transportation, with 85% of respondents reporting that they worked with their neighbors on this issue. Economic development (82%) and hazard mitigation/evacuation planning (80%) were, respectively, the second- and third-ranked areas of regional cooperation. Climate change planning and mitigation, although they rank at the bottom of the list, seem to have more people working across geographic boundaries than across bureaucratic ones. As the most complex issue, collaboration could be a challenge going forward for local governments that engage in climate change projects.

What Drives and Slows Down Community Action?

Economics drives communities to act. Fiscal savings is the top motivator for action, with 84% of respondents calling it a very significant or significant driver. Potential to attract development projects is another important motivator for 72% of local governments. In many ways, local governments see the connection between the environment and economic development as operational efficiency or as a way to attract investment.[12] Other important drivers are local leadership (82%) and federal or state funding (75%). These indicate the importance of capacity as technical expertise and fiscal resources (often outside grants) drive the ability of local governments to implement sustainability policies. Other drivers of sustainability can be seen in Figure 5.
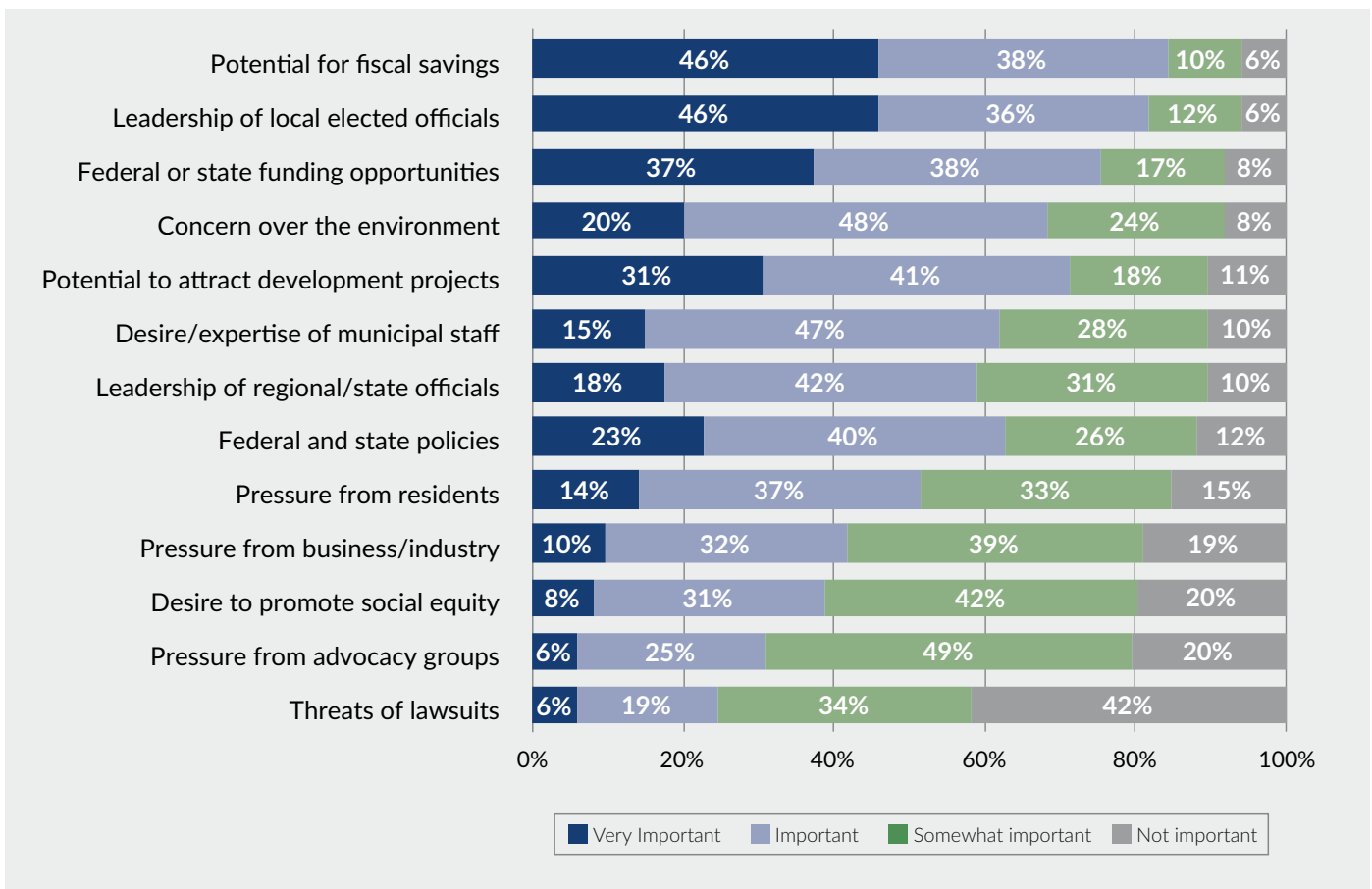
TABLE 4 ‖ Collaboration and Coordination in Different Areas of Sustainability		
PROGRAM AREA	**Interagency Collaboration**	**Intermunicipal Cooperation**
Land use planning/permitting	91%	73%
Roads, public transit, bike-pedestrian systems	N/A	85%
Economic development	85%	82%
Seeking funding and grants	85%	68%
Hazard mitigation/evacuation planning	84%	80%
Storm water management	82%	68%
Environmental protection	65%	61%
Open space/farmland preservation	55%	48%
Provision of affordable housing	50%	53%
Climate change mitigation	12%	20%
Climate change adaptation	9%	16%

Sample size: 1,899.
Note that not every respondent answered every question, so raw numerical totals in each program area may vary.

FIGURE 5 ‖ Rating the Factors That Motivate Sustainability Efforts

Factor	Very Important	Important	Somewhat important	Not important
Potential for fiscal savings	46%	38%	10%	6%
Leadership of local elected officials	46%	36%	12%	6%
Federal or state funding opportunities	37%	38%	17%	8%
Concern over the environment	20%	48%	24%	8%
Potential to attract development projects	31%	41%	18%	11%
Desire/expertise of municipal staff	15%	47%	28%	10%
Leadership of regional/state officials	18%	42%	31%	10%
Federal and state policies	23%	40%	26%	12%
Pressure from residents	14%	37%	33%	15%
Pressure from business/industry	10%	32%	39%	19%
Desire to promote social equity	8%	31%	42%	20%
Pressure from advocacy groups	6%	25%	49%	20%
Threats of lawsuits	6%	19%	34%	42%

Sample size: 1,899.
Note that not every respondent answered every question, so raw numerical totals for each type of resource may vary.

If funding and economic development drive sustainability, then it stands to reason that a lack of funding holds it back. The survey found that 88% of respondents cite this as the number one barrier to sustainability. No other barrier came close. State or federal restrictions are second, lack of staff capacity third, and opposition by elected officials fourth. Fewer than two-thirds of local governments chose all of these as either a significant or very significant barrier.

Are Environmental, Economic Development, and Social Equity Goals Linked?

Sustainability requires action across all three dimensions: environmental protection, economic development, and social equity. While the survey found economic development goals most commonly articulated by local governments as drivers of sustainability, social equity ranks low on many measures on this survey.

**The social equity gap.** The absence of social equity goals in sustainability programs is glaring, as shown in Figure 6. Only 14% of communities have energy conservation programs targeted to assist low-income residents. Such a program could reap important environmental benefits as well as save money for those poorer citizens who need it most. Only 8% of local governments have programs to protect low-income households from water service shut off—an increasingly important issue as some struggling communities seek to privatize the provision of this vital resource. Only 30% of localities provide incentives for affordable housing.

The one bright spot in terms of social equity was in the creation of hazard mitigation and emergency evacuation plans. Here the survey finds that 69% of plans include provisions specifically targeted to at-risk low-income populations and seniors. Hurricane Katrina and Super Storm Sandy have taught local governments that emergency plans have to be made for the most vulnerable in our communities. The challenge going forward is to extend this same attention to equity issues more broadly in local sustainability policy.
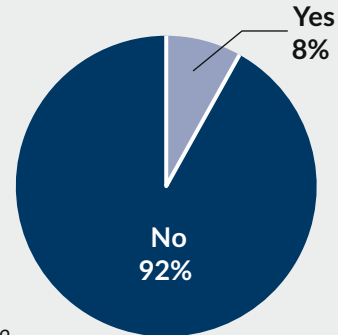
Mitigation plan or emergency evacuation/relocation plan addresses populations at risk

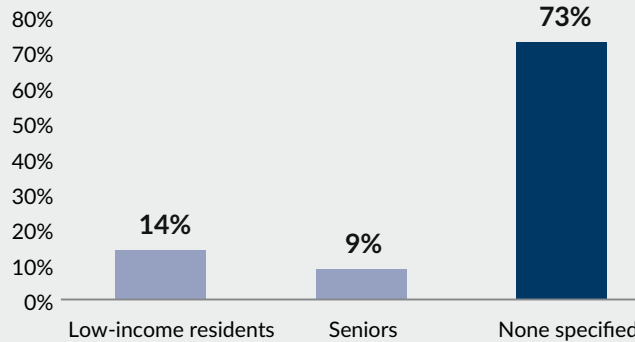No 31%

Yes 69%
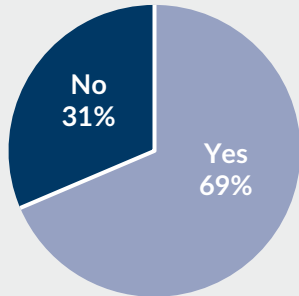
Sample size: 1,330.

Protect low-income households from water service shut off

Yes 8%

No 92%

Sample size: 1,899.

The groups that are assisted by energy conservation programs

	14%	9%	73%
	Low-income residents	Seniors	None specified

Sample size: 1,899.

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BY JELANI NEWTON

TACKLING THE HOUSING
Affordability Crisis:
The Critical Role of Local Government Leadership

In the years following the 2007–2009 Great Recession, housing affordability has become a growing concern in communities across the United States. One of every three American households spends more than 30% of income on housing costs—a level considered to be a burden on the household and referred to as "housing cost burdened." Among renters in particular, almost half fall into this category.[1] Further, approximately one in four renter households spends more than 50% of income on housing costs—a level considered "severely housing cost burdened." Forecasts suggest that without intervention, even more households will become severely cost burdened over the next decade.[2]

While housing policy and funding are driven primarily by the federal government, local governments have been taking a more active role in addressing the housing needs of their communities. Many local governments are experiencing declining federal and state allocations at a time when community needs are increasing. As national housing policy increasingly focuses on place-based solutions, the unique challenges and goals in individual neighborhoods require local leaders to develop innovative and targeted approaches.

This article explores the evolving role of local governments in addressing housing affordability in their communities and provides examples of traditional and new strategies to address an increasingly challenging situation.

TAKEAWAYS

As income growth lags behind growth in housing costs, housing affordability is a growing concern in post-recession America. Local governments play a critical role in assessing the specific housing needs of the communities they serve, then developing and implementing customized strategies to effectively meet those needs. Three case studies highlight the unique challenges and targeted strategies of three cities—Miami, Florida; Rocky Mount, North Carolina; and San Antonio, Texas.

Housing Affordability in Post-Recession America

As the U.S. continues to recover from the Great Recession, communities are evolving to adapt to what is being referred to as "a new normal." One of the realities of the post-recession economy is that income growth is not keeping pace with growth in housing costs. Between 2009 and 2014, median housing costs grew by approximately 6%. Median household incomes grew by only 4% over the same period.

This discrepancy grows substantially when focusing solely on renters. Among rental households, median household income grew by 6% between 2009 and 2014, while median housing costs grew by 12%. Indeed, slow or stagnant wage growth since the recession is one of a number of factors driving housing affordability challenges in many communities.[3]

Another reality of the post-recession economy is the growing proportion of renters. Between 2009 and 2014, the number of renter-occupied households increased by 11%, compared to a 1% decline among owner-occupied households over the same period.[4] Experts attribute this trend to a number of factors, including wariness among potential homebuyers after the housing market crash, more stringent credit standards for access to home financing, and the lifestyle preferences of the large population of millennials. This increase in demand for rental housing contributes to the rapid rise in prices.

These national trends paint a picture of the changing housing landscape in the U.S., but to better understand the impact that housing affordability has on families and their quality of life, it's important to observe the issues at the community level. Communities with a high proportion of cost-burdened households have very different drivers and impacts associated with this challenge. In some communities, the housing affordability challenges are driven primarily by escalating prices due to high demand for real estate. In other communities, decades of economic decline have led to a large proportion of low-income families struggling to afford quality housing.

Just as major drivers can vary from one community to another, the same is true of the impacts of high housing cost burdens. In some communities, this issue manifests itself in a large population of chronically homeless individuals and families. In other communities, housing affordability challenges result in displacement of long-time residents. Some communities have difficulty attracting or retaining businesses due to lack of housing options for wage earners. Others struggle with economically segregated neighborhoods and concentrations of extreme poverty.

The location-specific nature of many issues associated with housing affordability has required local governments to become increasingly active in setting specific goals for their communities and identifying innovative approaches to achieve them.

Traditional Approaches to Improving Housing Affordability

Local policies and programs for improving housing affordability are not a new phenomenon. Commonly used local strategies have included **development incentive**s to increase the supply of affordable housing and the **provision of subsidies** to low- to moderate-income families to help offset high housing costs.

According to ICMA's *2015 Survey of Local Government Sustainability Practices*, approximately one-third of local governments nationwide provide financial support or incentives for affordable housing. Larger communities and urban communities are more likely to use this approach than smaller and rural communities. Affordable housing subsidies and incentives are also seen more frequently in the western region of the country, where almost half of local governments reported their use. This region is led by California, where 70% of local governments reported provision of subsidies or incentives for affordable housing.[5]

Wealth building. In addition to incentives for affordable housing units, local governments have traditionally maintained a focus on programs that help low-income families build wealth. In Montgomery County, Maryland, the county's Housing Opportunities Commission operates the Family Self-Sufficiency program. This initiative, funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), helps families using housing vouchers or living in public housing to achieve stable housing and economic security.

Typically, families in HUD-assisted housing receive subsidies allowing them to pay no more than 30% of their income for housing. If their income increases, the amount that they pay for housing increases proportionally. Through the Family Self-Sufficiency program, as family earnings increase, an amount approximately equal to the increase in rent is placed into an escrow account for the family. Families are supported by case managers in achieving their education and employment goals, and upon graduation from the program, receive the funds placed in escrow.[6]

Affordable housing incentives and support to low-income families are fairly traditional approaches for local governments to address the housing affordability needs in their communities. With the evolving role of local governments in housing and community development, a variety of newer approaches that meet the specific needs of communities are becoming more common.

Recognizing Housing's Impact on Economic Development

One emerging trend in local approaches to housing affordability is the growing appreciation for the impact of housing on economic development. Increasingly, communities are finding that a lack of quality and affordable housing options for workers can hinder business growth and attraction. In ICMA's 2009 *Economic Development Survey*, 15% of local government respondents identified high housing costs as a barrier to economic development.[7]

In a follow-up survey conducted in 2014, more than 30% identified housing costs as a barrier.[8] Approximately 75% of the responding governments identified housing as at least a "low" barrier to economic development. It is

noteworthy that responses to this survey question varied by geography, with governments in New England and the Pacific Coast being more likely to identify high housing costs as an economic development barrier.[9] In highly populated areas, particularly, workers are showing a growing preference for housing that allows for easy transportation to their place of work. Also, access to a skilled labor force is a growing concern among businesses. Connecting businesses to qualified labor and residents to jobs through workforce housing is becoming a more common strategy among local governments.

Workforce housing. Among planning and community development professionals, the term "workforce housing" typically refers to housing that is priced at a level targeted to households with incomes between 80% and 120% of the area median income (AMI)—higher than the traditional target population for affordable housing programs (60% to 80% of AMI). These programs are designed to provide housing options for working families that would not be eligible for traditional affordable housing programs. Approximately 30% of local governments responding to ICMA's 2014 Economic Development Survey reported "medium" or "high" use of workforce housing as an economic development tool.[10]

Suffolk County, New York, employs a housing strategy that pursues both traditional affordable and workforce housing units. The program targets half of its subsidized units for workforce housing (80% to 120% of AMI), in an effort to provide opportunities for workers to live where they work and increase the county's economic competitiveness. The program also aims to create more housing options for graduates of the local school system and reduce the displacement of long-time residents.[11]

Emphasis on Coalescing

Interdepartmental collaboration. Another emerging trend among local governments is the increased focus on collaboration to address community housing challenges. A commonly cited challenge in local government community development efforts is the difficulty in coordinating with stakeholders in other departments or other jurisdictions. In developing and implementing housing strategies, many local governments miss the opportunity to align resources and strategies for more impactful outcomes. In 2015, 50% of local governments reported that departments in their jurisdiction coordinated on the provision of affordable housing. Jurisdictions with larger populations were more likely to report coordination between departments. Levels of interdepartmental coordination varied by region, with New England (65%) and the Pacific Coast (69%) showing the highest rates.

Regional coordination. The same survey showed that 53% of local governments reported coordination between localities in the region on the provision of affordable housing. Again, governments with larger populations showed higher rates of coordination than smaller governments. Geographically, local governments in the Pacific Coast (61%) and the South Atlantic (61%) regions reported higher rates of regional coordination.[12]

Cross-sector partnership. In addition to coordination between jurisdictions, local governments are increasingly focusing on partnership across sectors to achieve housing goals. Public-private partnerships are becoming a more popular way to finance and implement housing affordability initiatives. The city of Charlotte, North Carolina, has partnered with the Foundation for the Carolinas and other private and faith-based organizations to launch the Social Impact Housing Endowment Program. The program seeks to raise a $20 million endowment to support rental assistance and support services for homeless families and veterans in Mecklenburg County.[13]

In California, "Destination: Home" is a public-private partnership focused on ending homelessness in Santa Clara County. The initiative evolved over time from the city of San Jose's Homeless Strategy, Santa Clara County's Ten-Year Plan to End Homelessness, and a joint Blue Ribbon Commission on Homelessness. With participation from a large number of private, not-for-profit, and academic institutions, the program places housing at the center of the county's strategy to end homelessness.[14]

Case Studies of Local Strategies

Whether focused on traditional approaches or newly emerging practices, local governments play a critical role in assessing the specific needs of the communities that they serve and developing and implementing strategies to effectively meet those needs. The following case studies highlight the unique challenges and targeted strategies being pursued by three different cities—Miami, Florida; Rocky Mount, North Carolina; and San Antonio, Texas. The population, income, and housing statistics presented for each city are from the U.S. Census Bureau, *2014 American Communities Survey*.

Miami, Florida *(population: 416,432)*

MEASURE	MIAMI	UNITED STATES
Median Household Income	$30,858	$53,482
Percentage Renting	68.4%	35.6%
Cost-Burdened Homeowners	43.5%	27.4%
Cost-Burdened Renters	63.1%	48.3%

Over the last decade, the **city of Miami, Florida**, has seen significant volatility in its housing market. Dramatic growth in real estate values peaked in 2006 and was followed by the severe crash that came with the Great Recession. Now, several years after the end of the recession, the city is again seeing significant growth. Still, almost two-thirds of the city's renters are housing cost burdened.

Many of the drivers of Miami's housing affordability challenges are not unique. High demand for real estate among developers, a large proportion of renters, and slow income growth contribute to the large proportion of cost-burdened residents in the post-recession economy.

While many communities are confronted with these same challenges, several factors unique to Miami also contribute to housing affordability issues. Miami is a global city and is seen by many as the gateway to the Americas. The city has a large immigrant population, and sees significant foreign investment in real estate. The high foreign demand inflates prices, making housing less affordable to local residents. At the same time, the city's resident population is disproportionately older, with many individuals at retirement age with limited earning potential. The median household income in Miami is very low—approximately $31,000, compared to $53,000 nationally.[15] In contrast, the cost of living in Miami is 8.1% higher than the national average.[16]

In light of these circumstances, the city government has undertaken various local initiatives to address housing affordability among residents. The city's strategies focus primarily on leveraging the strong local and foreign demand for real estate to increase the supply of affordable housing units. This includes offering waivers of certain fees and requirements to incentivize the development and/or maintenance of affordable units. For example, developers building near transit hubs are able to reduce the amount of parking required to be built by reserving a certain portion of new units for residents earning 60% of AMI.

Developers are also allowed to avoid certain permit fees by reserving a portion of units for extremely low-income residents (earning 30% of AMI or less).[17] The city is also currently exploring opportunities to leverage high international demand to support the development of affordable housing through a program for immigrant investors. In 2014, the City of Miami received approval for designation as an EB-5 Regional Center for Foreign Investment through U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Through this program, temporary resident status is provided to investors and their families who invest at least $1 million in businesses that create at least ten full-time U.S. jobs.[18]

Housing affordability is a serious concern in the **city of Rocky Mount, North Carolina**, but the nature of the housing challenges faced by the city are different in many

Rocky Mount, North Carolina *(population: 57,071)*

MEASURE	ROCKY MOUNT	UNITED STATES
Median Household Income	$36,724	$53,482
Percentage Renting	46.4%	35.6%
Cost-Burdened Homeowners	28.5%	27.4%
Cost-Burdened Renters	56.5%	48.3%

ways than those seen in national trends. About an hour east of Raleigh, Rocky Mount is the principal city of its metropolitan area, which has been losing population since 2010. A decline in manufacturing jobs has contributed to the city's economic challenges. Unlike many cities struggling with housing affordability, there is not a high demand for housing and prices are not increasing to any significant extent. In fact, there have not been any apartment homes built without public subsidies in Rocky Mount in 15 years. Nonetheless, more than 40% of the city's households are cost burdened.

Affordability challenges in the city are driven primarily by low incomes among residents and the high utility and maintenance costs that come with an aging housing stock. On average, utility rates in Rocky Mount were approximately 30% higher than they were in the capital city of Raleigh, just an hour away. The high cost of utilities and maintenance further devalue the property, and a large portion of residents cannot afford the costly renovations and do not have access to capital.

With a focus on the specific needs of the community, the city undertook collaborative efforts to reduce utility costs for homeowners. The city is also working with banks to identify financing alternatives to help residents access the capital needed to renovate their homes.[19]

The **city of San Antonio** is the second largest city in Texas and the seventh largest city in the U.S. It has been one of the fastest growing cities in the nation and continues to show strong economic growth, with significant demand for development in the city's downtown. The strong growth seen in the downtown area inflates housing prices and puts pressure on long-time residents who may not be able to keep up with the higher costs.

With high housing cost burdens and high residential income segregation identified by the city as major challenges, activities around housing affordability in the downtown area are primarily driven by the goals of creating and maintaining diverse and inclusive communities. New city programs are targeted to help residents stay in

San Antonio, Texas (population: 1,385,438)

MEASURE	SAN ANTONIO	UNITED STATES
Median Household Income	$46,317	$53,482
Percentage Renting	45.0%	35.6%
Cost-Burdened Homeowners	23.5%	27.4%
Cost-Burdened Renters	46.5%	48.3%

their homes amid the rapid growth in the downtown area.

One program offered by the city is a property tax freeze for senior citizens. As home values grow, property tax bills grow as well. With many seniors living on a fixed income, the growth in property taxes contributes to the housing cost burdens faced by these residents. In order to help offset the increases in housing cost for senior citizens, the city freezes its portion of the property tax bill for residents older than 65.

Another program implemented by the city to preserve housing affordability and prevent displacement of low-income residents is the Center City Housing Incentive Policy (CCHIP). Based on a model adopted from Austin, Texas, this program offers incentives to developers to maintain the percentage of market rate units that existed when the incentive was received, thus preserving affordability for residents. Additional incentives are also provided if developers increase the affordable housing stock with more affordable units.[20]

Final Word

As income growth lags behind growth in housing costs, housing affordability is a growing concern in post-recession America. High housing cost burdens are impacting households across the country, but the specific circumstances driving these affordability issues vary from one community to another. Local governments have an important role to play in identifying and addressing the specific challenges contributing to the housing affordability issues in their communities.

Traditional approaches, such as development incentives and social mobility programs, continue to be popular among local governments. Emerging strategies, such as workforce housing programs and the use of public-private partnerships, are also becoming more common. As many communities are seeing flat or declining federal funding for housing initiatives, along with increasing community need, strong local leadership on housing affordability is becoming increasingly important. Local governments will need to continue to deploy creative, community-specific strategies and leverage cross-sector and regional partnerships to make quality housing accessible to all residents.

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BY KAREN THORESON

Innovation Loves a
Good Challenge:
2016 Case Studies from the Alliance for Innovation

One of the top reasons local government staff say they enjoy their work is that they know they are making a difference. Interestingly, how those differences manifest can take very different forms.

Great examples of communities and staff making a difference are found in the nearly 100 case studies submitted to the Alliance for Innovation for our annual Transforming Local Government conference. These case studies represent ambitious undertakings, attempts to solve wicked problems or substantially change the quality of offered services. For these diverse communities, the needle is clearly moving in the right direction.

Here are a few of my favorites from our 2016 submissions. Synopses of diverse ideas on how to make a community more sustainable, healthier, more inclusive, and welcoming follow.

Where: Austin, Texas

Population: 912,791; 12,973 full-time employees (FTEs)

Solution: Austin developed the Neighborhood Partnering Program (NPP), which is described as a local government version of Kickstarter (a funding platform for creative projects). NPP provides a way for community organizations to pitch and execute small to medium-size improvements in the city's right-of-way or on city-owned property in their neighborhood. Through this effort, underutilized spaces have been transformed into cycle tracks, trails, community gardens, pocket parks, and a home for homegrown art.

In 2009, the city council passed a resolution directing the city manager to develop a matching-fund program for neighborhood improvements. The city cobbled together money from different sources, leveraged the public works department's engineering services and field crews; and invited citizen groups to develop a concept for how their neighborhood could be improved. The results have been more than amazing.

First, the program has provided a collaborative space for city employees and community members to work together in problem solving and celebrating successes through the concept, design, permitting, and construction of their projects. Second, the development of green infrastructure—such as community gardens, rain gardens, bike lanes, and median improvements—has brightened neighborhoods across the city. And third, the process has engaged new private stakeholders in offering matching funding or people power to get the projects off the ground.

Obstacles: The primary obstacle was making the cost-match program accessible to all Austin residents, particularly those in low-income neighborhoods. This was addressed by allowing volunteer construction and ongoing maintenance hours (valued at $24.66/hour) to be eligible as a match. Such partners as a local branch of the American Society of Landscape Architects and professional service organizations were also convened to provide expertise on an as-needed basis. The city was also able to secure two full-time AmeriCorps VISTA members to serve as full-time staff.

Funding: Over the six years of the program's life span, the city has contributed $2 million in funding, and the community has contributed more than $1 million cash, in-kind professional services, sweat equity, and materials. More than 43 projects have been approved or completed, and they are spread across all council districts in the city.

Takeaways: NPP is replicable and can be scaled to any community. Austin believes that the combination of engaging the community for neighborhood improvement ideas and helping the neighborhood execute its project is key to Austin's success with this program. The ongoing assistance provided to design, engineer, and construct the project guards against long delays or cost overruns. And the resulting relationships formed within the community and with city staff have proven to be priceless!

Link to Case Study: Austin Neighborhood Partnering Program, http://transformgov.org/en/knowledge_network/documents/kn/document/308003

Where: Coon Rapids, Minnesota

Population: 62,112; 229 FTEs

Solution: Homes for Generations II was designed to address Coon Rapids' aging housing stock. Although the Great Recession and the accompanying housing crisis are now behind most communities, many Coon Rapids homeowners were still apprehensive about making major housing investments that ultimately would improve their home and their neighborhoods. This program combines financial incentives, architectural consultations, and community educational events to inspire residential homeowner investments that are collectively "raising all boats" in older neighborhoods.

Home for Generations II is a successor to a 2009 program by which the city purchased, remodeled, and showcased previously foreclosed homes during the economic downturn. A portion of that program also included a home tour, which was especially popular. The 2013 iteration includes the home tour, but now also provides a combination of loans, permit rebates, architectural assistance, and grants for large-scale home projects and significant exterior "curb appeal" improvements that have the potential to improve the whole block. The home tour then enables the city to market these success stories, which in turn encourages other residents to envision a remodel of their own.

In order to be as inclusive as possible, the city program has no income restrictions and is available to all homeowners living in structures at least 20 years old (which is 80% of Coon Rapids housing stock).

Obstacles: Although the program's eligibility is broad, the minimum project cost of $35,000 still represents a significant cost barrier. Some homeowners lack the cash reserves to pay the post-grant construction balance or the home equity necessary to qualify for bank financing. So the city,

through its Mortgage Assistance Foundation, offers its own low-interest financing alternative. It works with the Center for Energy and Environment, which uses more lenient underwriting criteria. This allows for more inclusivity and yet provides protection of the Home for Generations II financial health.

Funding: From 2013 to 2015 the city received 192 applications and awarded $194,335 in grants and $27,890 in rebates to 56 projects. The estimated leveraged value of those projects is $3,863,710. The community engagement with the program also brought more than 2,000 people to the home tour, maximizing the city's outreach efforts via social and traditional media.

Takeaways: Project financing of housing programs can be complicated, but most places have sources that could help bring this effort to proper scale in their community. Coon Rapids recognized that three critical components of their effort were (1) the requirement that homeowners meet with an architect (subsidized by the city) to get new and more aesthetic ideas for their projects;(2) coordinating the home tour to help generate significant interest in the home remodeling results; and (3) offering a comprehensive approach with various incentives to meet individual homeowner needs.

Link to Case Study: Coon Rapids Homeowner Reinvestment Project, http://transformgov.org/en/knowledge_network/documents/kn/document/308018

> CHALLENGE: *Mobilize your techy citizens into volunteer coders for big community results.*

Where: Edmonton, Alberta, Canada

Population: 812,200; 14,866 FTEs

Solution: Governments often prefer to be in control of their project and program delivery. Where staffers might search for a specific solution to a problem needing to be solved, BetaCityYEG harnessed a citizen-led group that brought solutions looking for problems. An Edmonton staffer joined with a University of Alberta Masters student to convene the city's civic technology entrepreneurs to collaborate with one another to solve unspecified local problems.

The civic tech volunteers worked together to use open source software and open data to create projects such as a best-in-class social service locator web application, an SMS (short message service)-based voting tool, low-cost infrared pedestrian counters, a live-streaming recording device in a public piano, hundreds of 360-degree photos of the city's river valley trails, a local oral history collection, and much more.

Obstacles: BetaCityYEG is truly citizen lead, so members only take on projects that are of interest to them. Thus, the projects they pursue do not necessarily pair up with the city's agenda for service delivery. Further, if the citizen needs special equipment or resources, the city staffer's job is to locate those resources within the city structure or local businesses to move the project forward. The traditional procurement process can be a barrier because many of the volunteers would not qualify as traditional vendors with whom to contract. Coordinators say that one of the most challenging components is managing the relationship between positive volunteerism and exploiting those skills for a free city benefit.

Funding: BetaCityYEG started with a $1,500 grant. Since then the citizens have created products of incredible value at a fraction of the cost or sometimes free. For instance, the city redeployed an open-source web application in a day, something that originally took one year to create and cost approximately $30,000 in developer time. The city and its partners are using a volunteer-created open source pedestrian counter that cost around $150, whereas a typical pedestrian counter costs around $3,000.

Takeaways: Creating an environment that draws creative people to share and collaborate around community solutions is possible, but not for the faint hearted. Relinquishing control and learning about what technology-enabled citizens are interested in can create unlikely solutions that benefit the entire community.

Link to Case Study: Edmonton Citizens and Technology, http://transformgov.org/en/knowledge_network/documents/kn/document/308005

> CHALLENGE: *Engage millennials in government.*

Where: Manatee County, Florida

Population: 351,746; 3,362 FTEs

Solution: Manatee County decided that its efforts to attract and engage millennials was not working. The county created the Manatee Millennial Movement (M3) to pursue a strategy of "Stop Talking About Us and Start Talking to Us." With M3, the county totally refocused its outreach and engagement, using social media and fun events to connect with millennials where they thrive—for instance, at colleges and other institutions of higher learning and at other millennial group meetings—and to draw them into influential policy and advisory roles.

The first event was a group meeting with the Manatee County Millennials Group M3 and the Manatee Chamber of Commerce Young Professionals to review millennial hous-

ing needs. Through its M3 effort, the county has engaged more than 500 young residents to get them involved in setting a new vision and developing positive relationships with those who will soon be leaders in the community.

Obstacles: One key obstacle was presenting the value that engaging and listening to this target population presented to the county. It was difficult for some staff members to see the bigger picture and recognize the changing workforce. It was crucial to identify the similarities between the age groups and find the common ground on important issues. A second challenge was, following the listening process, developing a series of recommendations on how to make the community more welcoming and a competitive place for millennials to live over the long term.

Funding: Although the cost of the first event approached $25,000, the county's cost was less than $4,000 with all other costs being covered by in-kind donations, sponsorships, and partnerships.

Takeaways: Engaging millennials in local government and traditional community events has proven elusive in locales across the continent. Manatee's M3 engagement strategy combined new outreach methods (e.g., expanded social media to Facebook, Twitter, Snapshot, and daily feeds) with events planned for locales where millennials are rather than trying to attract these young people to traditional venues. So, for example, we met millennials at a library event of millennial families and with pop-ups near such hot spots for millennials as ballgames, parks, and campuses.

But perhaps of most importance, we promised that the input that was gathered and the place at the table that was offered would indeed be considered, acted on, and used in planning for their future community.

Link to Case Study: Manatee County Millennial Engagement, http://transformgov.org/en/knowledge_network/documents/kn/document/308015

CHALLENGE: *Turn the proverbial greasy sow's ear into a sustainable silk purse.*

Where: Tempe, Arizona

Population: 172,816; 1,808 FTEs

Solution: How can a community use its municipal purchasing power to incentivize sustainable practices in a regulated restaurant environment to achieve a better sewer infrastructure?

The city of Tempe with local restaurateurs created the Tempe Grease Cooperative (TGC)—the first in the world, by which the regulatory sewer authority brokers both

pricing and service quality on behalf of restaurants that voluntarily enroll to comply with rules associated with the discharge of fats, oils, and grease. In return for the non-regulated compliance, business owners receive contract discounts through the city, an improved and sustainable plumbing and sewer infrastructure, and an advocate for repurposing their waste as a renewable energy source.

Compliance assurance is key for the municipal sewer system, reducing sewer overflows, protecting infrastructure, and reducing odors for the public and business owners. Typically, this is done through surprise inspections, citations, and ultimately fines. Turning the model upside down to create incentives for nonregulated compliance took ingenuity and courage.

The results are simply outstanding. After 12 months of implementation, 109 food service establishments—or approximately one in nine—enrolled in the program. By mid-2016, that figure has risen to one in six of all restaurants in Tempe. Together they are diverting more than 2,500 tons of FOG (fats, oil, and grease) and dense liquid restaurant waste—approximately 250 tons of which is renewable. In turn the restaurateurs receive 15%-25% savings on products and the waste removal service that help them keep their equipment in compliance.

Obstacles: Because the TGC was the first in the world, there was no model or guidelines to follow. The nature of the retail restaurant business requires long hours of the owners, so simply finding the time to explain the benefits and build trust among potential beneficiaries was difficult. Despite the clear benefits, initial enrollment was the biggest challenge and that was exacerbated by the natural caution and frustration of a food industry that didn't come to the table trusting its regulators.

However, as an understanding grew and with the help of Arizona State University School of Sustainability's interns and students who visited the restaurants door to door with flyers, the word got out of the program's benefit, lower cost, and exemplary service. The enrolled restaurant owners now are so taken with the program that they have become the most vocal marketers to their peers.

Takeaways: When trying to solve a difficult problem, look to other industries for new ideas or solutions to adapt. Tempe looked at the traditional retailer coop model where firms banded together to find cost savings, marketing strength, and common solutions to their unique problems. Then Tempe asked (and ultimately answered), how can we create a win-win relationship with those we regulate, a sustainable green solution that rewards business owners for compliance.

Link to Case Study: Tempe Grease Cooperative, http://transformgov.org/en/knowledge_network/documents/kn/document/308183

Where: Olathe, Kansas

Population: 125,872; 1,055 FTEs

Solution: The traditional EMS (emergency medical service) system, initiated via a 911 call, typically sends people to the emergency room when in actuality the situation may not require acute care. Olathe's new Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) program instead evaluates patients' needs in the field, helps navigate callers to the right solution for their circumstance, and connects patients to a health care provider who can become a consistent partner in their care.

Olathe's fire operations were similar to other cities in providing traditional emergency service response to requests for service. This often meant sending mismatched resources (e.g., a full-size fire truck) on an emergency medical call. The MIH team is certified in community paramedicine and is able to assess the situation and what type of response is warranted. The team has a relationship with a local federally-qualified health clinic that provides a dedicated full-time nurse practitioner for the program. Further, the clinic can arrange for follow-up appointments, lab work, and other services, thereby providing more appropriate long-term care. Instead of a big fire truck, the MIH team travels in a smaller vehicle outfitted with medical supplies and advanced life-support equipment.

In the first six months of the program, the MIH team interacted with more people than did Olathe's busiest fire truck. In 2015, the MIH team saw more than 3,000 people.

Obstacles: Integration of the program into the community's existing healthcare network was a challenge. To help address the challenge, the fire department collaborated with the local hospital by exchanging information and ideas. The local collaboration led to the connection of the fire department to the Health Partnership Clinic (HPC), which provides medical, dental, and behavioral health services and is Medicare/Medicaid approved. HPC welcomed the partnership, and the hospital provided funding for the nurse practitioner for four years.

Funding: The first-year cost for the MIH program was $450,000. The nurse practitioner salary was donated by the hospital, and the paramedics were part of the fire department's operating budget (all personnel costs totaled $326,000). Vehicles with the necessary equipment, medical supplies, and consultants added $104,000. The fire department also received a $20,000 capacity-building grant from the REACH Healthcare Foundation to refine the program's outcomes. Savings are expected across the healthcare system by avoiding preventable transports, helping individuals manage their health proactively, and using fire vehicles more effectively.

Takeaways: Sometimes expanding or rethinking the mission of a public safety service can actually improve service outcomes and cost less money. Olathe officials thought carefully about the outcomes they wanted to achieve in their emergency medical services operation and what community outcomes they hoped to achieve. This principle can be applied in many disciplines outside public safety—and should be!

Link to Case Study: Olathe Mobile Integrated Health, http://transformgov.org/en/knowledge_network/documents/kn/document/308194

LESSONS LEARNED

Each of these communities had its own problem to solve or goal to achieve in very different public sector disciplines. Each learned something new in the quest to make a difference.

Austin knew that other communities had undertaken neighborhood improvement programs, but when they combined theirs with a theme of sustainability and start-to-finish cooperation from city departments, they saved time and money, reduced mistakes, and created community goodwill.

Coon Rapids learned from its first rendition of its home remodeling program and changed the homeowner eligibility, financing, and professional assistance portion of the program (a lot!) but kept the popular home tour event. These changes generated more than 10 times the community involvement, making even more residents excited about making improvements to their homes.

Edmonton may have felt that collaborating with citizens to identify solutions first and link those to problems second, was a page out of Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland. But careful listening to technology-inspired citizens revealed matches to city goals that achieved both parties' goals.

Manatee County found that finding your audience and connecting to them where they are is more successful than simply bemoaning their lack of engagement. As a county with 25% of its population over 65 years of age and a large portion of the workforce on the verge of retirement, "Stop Talking about Us and Start Talking to Us" proved to be the right strategy.

Tempe followed a successful research and development model in program development by identifying successful business models that retail businesses use in creating business districts—a model that moved from competition among owners to collaboration among partners. Tempe

simply substituted moving from regulation to collaboration. Adapting a different world view of the problem can change everything.

Olathe's leadership stepped back from tinkering with their view of how fire operations currently work, to ask the questions, What are the organizational and community outcomes we want? What is the best outcome we can achieve for the individuals who call us? How can our emergency service act as prevention? Making sure you are asking the right questions is key to beginning to generate new and better ideas.

Six different problems generated very different solutions. The common thread is that these local governments demonstrated leadership, changed their approach, set high goals, collaborated with others, and measured their results. In each instance, they made a difference. They represent the best of our work in local government. And these results can be attainable in communities of any size in any region.

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BY LAURA GODDEERIS

Food for Thought:

How and Why Local Governments Support Local Food Systems

For many of us, food is an easy thing to take for granted, but the systems that ensure we're able to access and enjoy food are not always obvious, particularly if you don't run a farm, a grocery store, a restaurant, or a food pantry. As a local government leader, it's unlikely you'd consider yourself to be in the food business.

But consider for a moment how food is at the core of community well-being. Different metrics of well-being have been used to evaluate communities in the United States and abroad, and they often include factors related to individuals' health and security. Food can be closely linked to each. It provides sustenance, fueling our performance at school, work, and play; it's hard to dispute that everyone deserves access to food that is healthy, affordable, and culturally appropriate.

Strong economies, sustainable environments, and opportunities for interaction also contribute to community livability. Food-related sectors make up significant components of our workforce, from agriculture to retail to restaurants. Food can be produced in ways that either degrade or conserve our natural resources. And from families gathering at the dinner table to neighbors mingling at a community

TAKEAWAYS

The results of the 2015 Food Systems Survey affirm that local food systems provide fertile ground for local government innovation, regardless of community size, geography, or other community characteristics. Local government support for food systems can be catalytic and complementary to actions of other community partners and can leverage the many ways food intersects with community well-being and quality of life.

garden or farmers market, food facilitates connectedness.

While local governments are admittedly not primarily responsible for generating their communities' food supplies, local government plans, policies, programs, and posture do influence—for better or worse—how food is produced, processed, distributed, accessed, and disposed of. It is possible to leverage these local government practices and tools to promote quality of life, whatever that means to you and your constituents, through local food system activities.

Many communities have figured this out.

Three years since we fielded the first comprehensive national study of local governments' food-related activities,[1] ICMA and the Michigan State University Center for

Regional Food Systems conducted a follow-up survey (called the 2015 Food Systems Survey) in the summer of 2015. A total of 2,237 local governments responded to this survey, at a response rate of 15.7%. Table 1 provides a summary of responses.[2]

As in 2012, the 2015 instrument covered a wide array of potential opportunities for local governments to engage in food system development, including specific policies, practices, and programs. We also inquired about partner-

ships, funding sources, and motivations and drivers of food-related activity.

While the incidence of various specific activities appears modest in many cases, if we take a wide-angle view, a majority of local governments can and do find ways to support local food systems.

Consider these observations about the local governments that responded to the survey:

- 73% provide some type of support—that is, via policy, practice, or as a partner in or administrator of a program—to at least one of 24 types of local food system activities suggested by our survey.
- 56% associated their food-related plans, policies, and/or programs with at least one, and on average 2.9, community priorities such as public health, community development, or economic development.
- Similarly, 56% identified at least one of their departments with responsibility for food systems issues.

These municipalities and counties referenced above can be found in every state; range in population from under 2,500 to over 1 million; and represent every form of government. These results affirm our previous assertion that local food systems provide fertile ground for local government innovation, regardless of community size, geography, or other community characteristics. This analysis will review some of the more common approaches observed in 2015.

Targets of Specific Policies, Programs

As we recognized in 2012, there are often multiple forms of support local governments can provide to a given food system activity:

- local ordinances or zoning can provide the legal basis for something to exist

TABLE 1 ‖ Response Rates of 2015 Food Systems Survey			
CATEGORY	Number of Municipalities/ Counties Surveyed (A)	Number Responding	Percent of (A)
	14,233	2,237	15.7%
Population group			
Over 1,000,000	44	8	18.2%
500,000 - 1,000,000	99	7	7.1%
250,000 - 499,999	177	25	14.1%
100,000 - 249,999	551	90	16.3%
50,000 - 99,999	965	132	13.7%
25,000 - 49,999	1,677	233	13.9%
10,000 - 24,999	3,220	467	14.5%
5,000 - 9,999	3,179	518	16.3%
2,500 - 4,999	4,191	734	17.5%
Under 2,500	130	23	17.7%
Geographic division			
New England	866	150	17.3%
Mid-Atlantic	2,476	286	11.6%
East North-Central	3,891	695	17.9%
West North-Central	1,515	282	18.6%
South Atlantic	1,615	293	18.1%
East South-Central	872	68	7.8%
West South-Central	1,341	162	12.1%
Mountain	740	127	17.2%
Pacific Coast	917	174	19.0%
Metro Type			
Municipalities/ Cities	11,170	1,892	16.9%
Counties	3,063	345	11.3%

FIGURE 1 ‖ Local Governments Supporting Any Food-Related Activity

Does the local government support at least one food-related activity?

No 27%
Yes 73%

Sample size: 2,062.
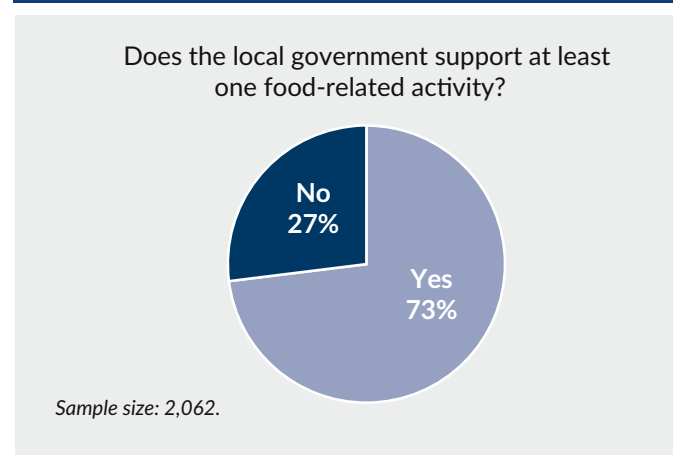
FIGURE 2 ∥ Presence of Local Food Activities and Local Government Support

Establishing and managing farmers markets (n=1,985): 53% / 33%

Providing emergency food to those in need (n=1,953): 46% / 25%

Keeping chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other non-traditional zones (n=1,973): 41% / 36%

Providing land for community gardens (n=1,960): 38% / 29%

Preserving farmland (n=1,966): 37% / 29%

Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (n=1,940): 33% / 23%

Promoting municipal or backyard composting (n=1,965): 33% / 25%

Selling produce at/from community gardens or farm stands (n=1,977): 30% / 16%

Providing water for community gardens (n=1,940): 29% / 24%

Donating surplus food from restaurants or stores to food banks or shelters (n=1,951): 28% / 6%

Promoting agri- or food-related tourism (n=1,949): 25% / 16%

Encouraging food trucks, mobile food vending, and/or pop-up food businesses (n=1,962): 24% / 17%

Expanding acceptance of food assistance benefits (e.g., SNAP, WIC) at farmers markets, stores, etc. (n=1,960): 23% / 10%

Buying local in government facilities (n=1,926): 18% / 15%

Providing healthy food options in government facilities (n=1,953): 16% / 13%

Creating food jobs (in food production, retail, service, etc.) (n=1,950): 14% / 9%

Encouraging green roofs and/or edible landscaping (1,943): 13% / 9%

Encouraging production and/or processing of value-added food products (n=1,957): 12% / 7%

Expanding purchasing power of food assistance benefits (e.g., bonus vouchers) (n=1,940): 11% / 5%

Creating/operating food hubs (n=1,938): 8% / 4%

Encouraging corner stores to stock healthy food (n=1,948): 7% / 3%

Establishing grocery stores in under-served areas (n=1,940): 7% / 4%

Redeveloping brownfields for food-related activity (n=1,945): 6% / 4%

Restricting or taxing the location or sale of fast food, junk food, or unhealthy food (n=1,941): 3% / 2%

Legend: ■ Acitivity exists ■ Local government support

- internal practices, formal policies, or partnerships can dedicate human, capital, or financial resources
- administration of projects or programs can even reside solely within a unit of government.[3]

Figure 1 illustrates the share of responding local governments that provide any form of support to at least one of the 24 types of local food activities described within the survey.[4]

Figure 2 displays the full list of local food activity targets included in the survey and the degree to which they were reported to exist at all, as well as the degree to which local governments are providing support in the form of a

policy, a practice, or in the partial or full administration of a program.

As in 2012, local governments ranked farmers markets and emergency food programs highest in terms of activities present in a community. Just over half of local governments responding—53%—indicated the existence of a local farmers market, with nearly two-thirds of those 1,000+ markets supported by a local government program or policy. In 2012, approximately 60% of local governments reported the presence of programs (with or without local government support) to collect and/or donate food to those in need.

In 2015, as Figure 2 indicates, 46% of local governments reported the presence of emergency food provision activities, and 28% reported the presence of activities facilitating the donation of surplus food from stores or restaurants. We hypothesize this decline is due in part to the change in survey and question format; though these types of activities were reported less frequently in 2015, "emergency food" remained a common frame of reference for local governments, as observed here and in responses to other survey questions.

Other relatively common activities receiving some form of local government support included the keeping of chickens, goats, bees, and the like in residential or nontraditional zones (36%), the provision of land for community gardens (29%), and farmland preservation (29%).

Food System Plans, Processes

In addition to specific policies and programs, local governments can support food systems through official plans and planning processes (see "Food System Plan Examples" sidebar). Similar to our findings in 2012, 20% of responding local governments reported addressing food systems through an official plan or strategy [not shown]. Of these approximately 400 communities, nearly half described them as comprehensive or master plans. Other examples cited included economic development, sustainability, and more than 50 food-specific plans.

Mapping of the food environment, a specific planning process to which local governments could lend expertise, was observed at a similarly low rate as in 2012—only about 8% of communities had conducted their own mapping or engaged external consultants or partners to do so.

Why Local Governments Get Involved

We expanded the 2015 survey to better answer the question of why local governments get involved. As noted earlier and illustrated in Figure 3, over half of responding local governments associated their food-related activities with at least one broader community priority area. Among those 1,100 communities, top priorities included public health (55%), community development (49%), economic

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FOOD SYSTEM PLAN EXAMPLES

Marquette County, Michigan

Though located in Michigan's less populous Upper Peninsula, Marquette County has emerged as a statewide leader and even garnered national attention in the field of food systems planning. In 2013, the county officially adopted a "Local Food Supply Plan" as a new chapter to its Comprehensive Plan. The food supply document outlines a vision and strategies to advise its planning commission, policy makers, and community partners on opportunities for local food and agriculture to promote the health, economy, and resiliency of the region.

For more information, visit: http://www.co.marquette.mi.us/departments/planning/local_food_supply_plan.php.

Riverside, California

A cross-sector, public-private coalition, The Riverside Food Systems Alliance, guided the development (with support from a consultant, himself a former local elected official) of the Riverside Food and Agriculture Policy Action Plan, formally adopted by the Riverside city council in 2015. This comprehensive food-oriented plan for what was once "The Citrus Capital of the World" articulates implementation roles for city staff and advisory bodies, but also reaches beyond city limits in identifying key partners and connections to relevant county-level planning and public health initiatives.

For more information, visit: http://seizingourdestiny.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/Final-Riverside-Food-Policy-Action-Plan.pdf.

TABLE 2 ‖ Local Government Motivations for Addressing Food

| PERCENTAGE REPORTING (N=1,110)	Motivation	Number of Communities	Most Common Activities Observed in These Communities
55%	**Public health**	614	• Establishing & managing farmers markets (57%) • Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (51%) • Keeping chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other nontraditional zones (51%) • Providing land for community gardens (47%)
49%	**Community development**	543	• Establishing & managing farmers markets (57%) • Keeping chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other nontraditional zones (52%) • Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (47%)
38%	**Economic and workforce development**	424	• Establishing & managing farmers markets (57%) • Keeping chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other nontraditional zones (50%) • Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (46%)
37%	**Agricultural land preservation**	410	• Preserving farmland (81%) • Keeping of chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other nontraditional zones (47%) • Establishing & managing farmers markets (46%)
33%	**Environmental stewardship**	361	• Preserving farmland (58%) • Keeping of chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other nontraditional zones (57%) • Establishing & managing farmers markets (57%)
25%	**Food access/ security**	283	• Establishing & managing farmers markets (62%) • Providing land for community gardens (58%) • Keeping chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or nontraditional zones (55%) • Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (55%)
19%	**Social equity**	215	• Establishing & managing farmers markets (63%) • Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (60%) • Providing land for community gardens (60%) • Providing emergency food to those in need (58%)
19%	**Public safety**	214	• Keeping chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other nontraditional zones (55%) • Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (48%) • Providing emergency food to those in need (47%)
7%	**Transportation**	74	• Promoting healthy eating/obesity prevention (55%) • Keeping chickens, goats, bees, etc., in residential or other nontraditional zones (54%) • Establishing & managing farmers markets (53%)

and workforce development (38%), and agricultural land preservation (36%). Counties were more likely to identify multiple priority areas. (See "Tying Motivations to Specific Activities" sidebar.)

While the survey structure and this level of analysis did not permit us to statistically correlate specific priorities with specific activities, Table 2 displays the most common local food activities supported by local governments expressing
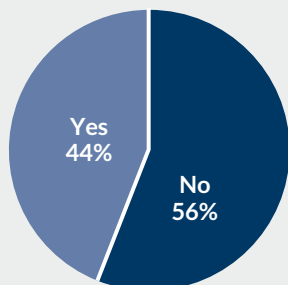
various motivations for engagement. It is not too surprising that establishing and managing farmers markets (which was identified as the most supported activity) appears associated with nearly all of the various motivations.

Likewise, it seems appropriate that 81% of communities motivated by agricultural land preservation would support farmland preservation programs. It is a bit more interesting, however, to consider how supporting the keeping of chickens, goats, bees, and the like might also be framed in so many different contexts, from public health, to economic and workforce development, to transportation.

Leading the Charge

We posed the question of who is leading the charge to local governments in a couple of different ways. First, following a question initially explored in 2012, we asked which municipal or county departments had food policies

FIGURE 4 ‖ Local Governments Identifying at Least One Department with Food-Related Responsibilities

Does the local government have at least one department with food-related responsiblities?

Yes 45%

No 55%
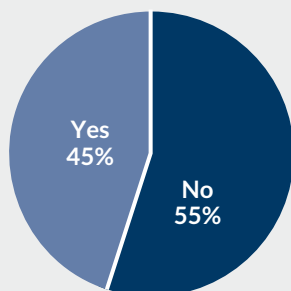
Sample size: 1,985.

TYING MOTIVATIONS TO SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES

Polk County, North Carolina

The Polk County Agricultural Office serves as a hub for support and programming for local food businesses and farmers and to "protect the agrarian nature of the community." Key activities over the last 6 years have included capacity-building for farmers markets, a local food store, a virtual food hub, a farmland preservation program, a tool-sharing cooperative, and regular outreach and education events. Many of these and other complementary activities are based out of the Mill Spring Agricultural Center, an abandoned school facility donated to and operated by the Polk County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Local government efforts are led by an agricultural economic development director with support from AmeriCorps volunteers, and advised by the county's Farmland Preservation Board.
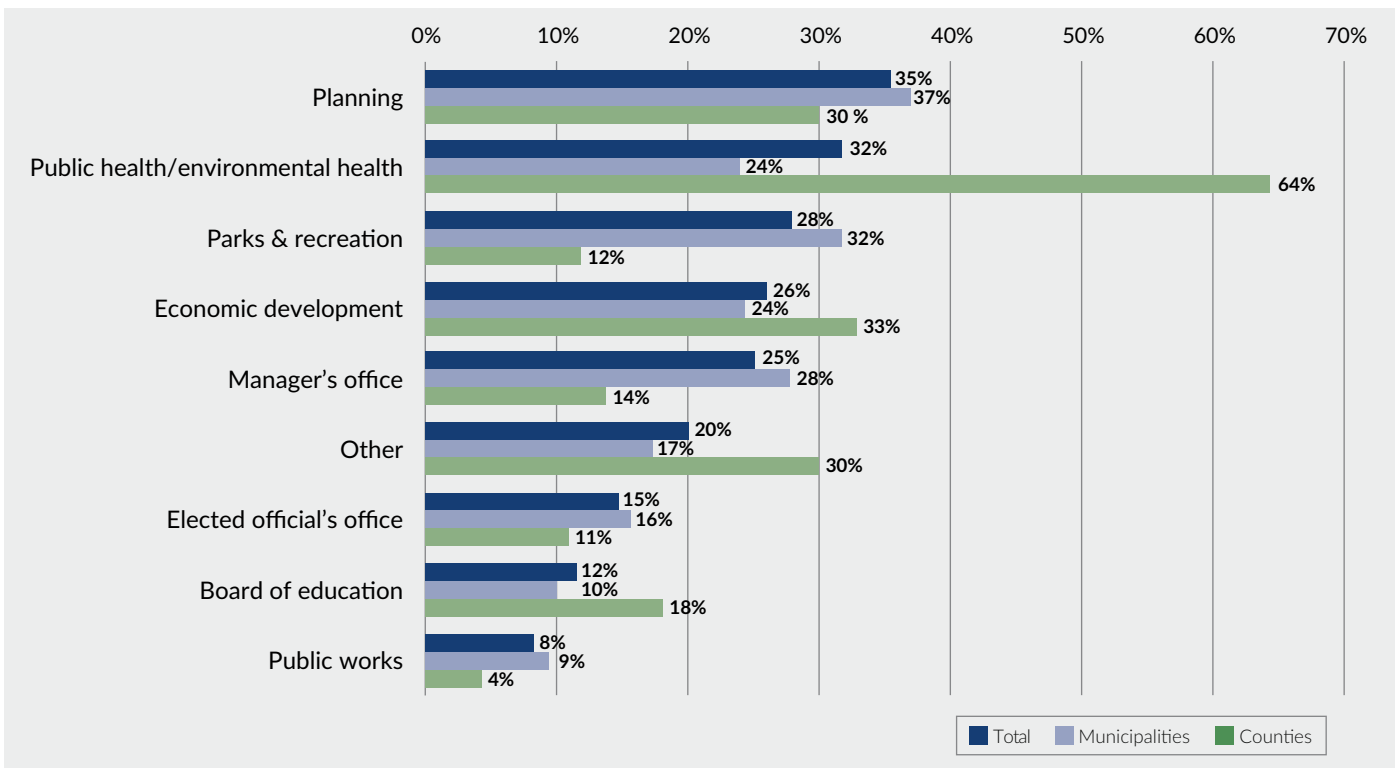
For more information, visit: http://polkcounty-farms.org.

Sutter County, California

Sutter County's public health department has been a key partner in the development of a County Nutrition Action Plan to "reduce food insecurity by supporting education, policies, and environments that promote physical activity, nutrition, and access to healthy foods." Specific activities have included outreach around nutrition education and physical activity to SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, formerly known as "food stamps") participants, promotion of healthy meeting guidelines (e.g., ensuring healthy refreshment options and breaks for physical activity) and healthy food at community events, and support for gardening programs at public housing sites. More recently, this work has been linked with other complementary, cross-sector activities as part of the Creating a Healthier Sutter Collaborative.
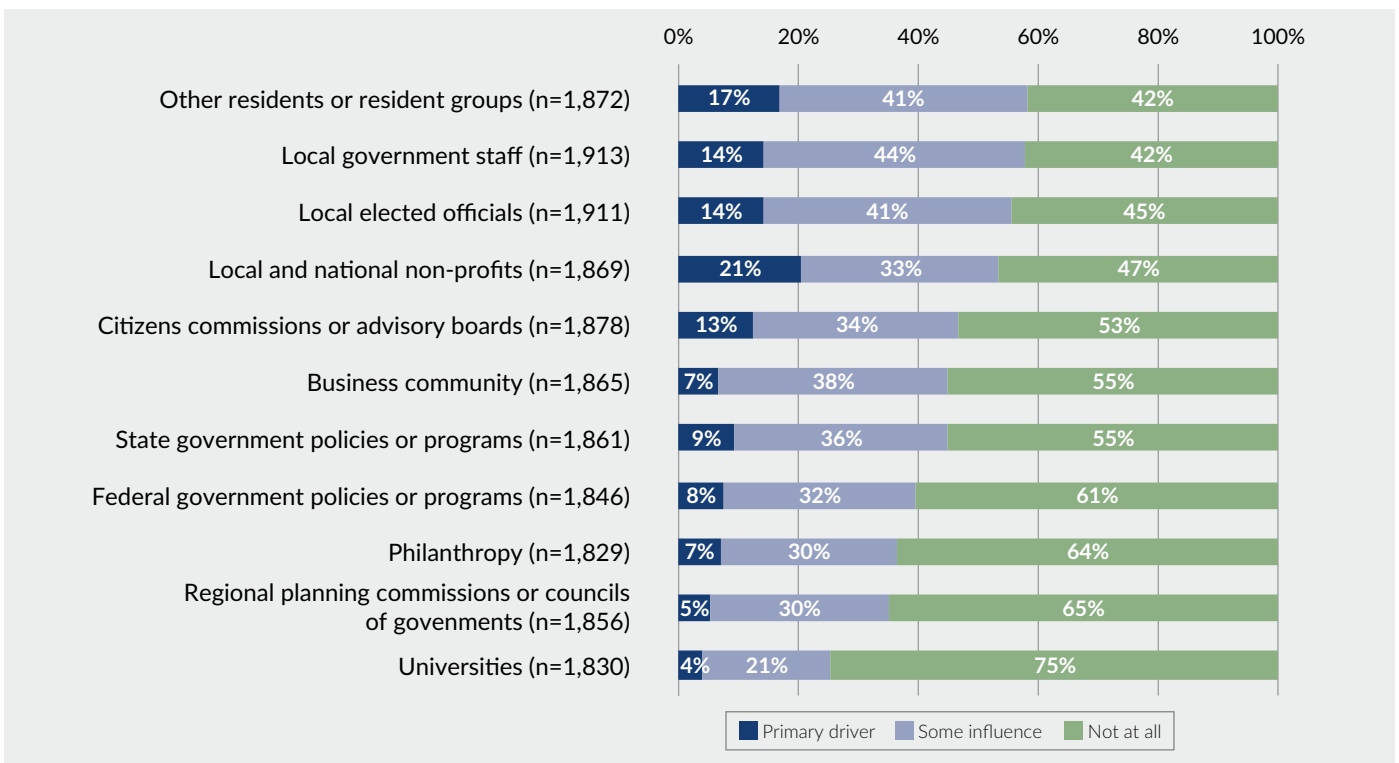
For more information, visit: http://www.sutter-county.org/publichealth/.

FIGURE 5 ‖ Departments Commonly Responsible for Food

FIGURE 5 ‖ Departments Commonly Responsible for Food

Planning
- Total: 35%
- Municipalities: 37%
- Counties: 30 %

Public health/environmental health
- Total: 32%
- Municipalities: 24%
- Counties: 64%

Parks & recreation
- Total: 28%
- Municipalities: 32%
- Counties: 12%

Economic development
- Total: 26%
- Municipalities: 24%
- Counties: 33%

Manager's office
- Total: 25%
- Municipalities: 28%
- Counties: 14%

Other
- Total: 20%
- Municipalities: 17%
- Counties: 30%

Elected official's office
- Total: 15%
- Municipalities: 16%
- Counties: 11%

Board of education
- Total: 12%
- Municipalities: 10%
- Counties: 18%

Public works
- Total: 8%
- Municipalities: 9%
- Counties: 4%

Legend: Total | Municipalities | Counties

Sample size: 1,096.

FIGURE 6 ‖ Stakeholders' Role in Continuing/Enhancing Local Food System Efforts

Stakeholder	Primary driver	Some influence	Not at all
Other residents or resident groups (n=1,872)	17%	41%	42%
Local government staff (n=1,913)	14%	44%	42%
Local elected officials (n=1,911)	14%	41%	45%
Local and national non-profits (n=1,869)	21%	33%	47%
Citizens commissions or advisory boards (n=1,878)	13%	34%	53%
Business community (n=1,865)	7%	38%	55%
State government policies or programs (n=1,861)	9%	36%	55%
Federal government policies or programs (n=1,846)	8%	32%	61%
Philanthropy (n=1,829)	7%	30%	64%
Regional planning commissions or councils of govenments (n=1,856)	5%	30%	65%
Universities (n=1,830)	4%	21%	75%

Legend: Primary driver | Some influence | Not at all

or programs within their scope of responsibility. As stated earlier and illustrated by Figure 4, a majority of respondents—55%—identified at least one department with this role.

Of those approximately 1,100 communities, whose responses are summarized in Figure 5, the average number of departments reported was two [not shown]; specific departments commonly reported included planning (35%), public health/environmental health (32%), parks and recreation (28%), economic development (26%), and the manager's office (25%). County health departments were again an especially common response (64%, compared to 88% in 2012), but overall, results suggest much flexibility when thinking about who within a local government might provide oversight to (or whose work might be affected by) food activities.

Even local governments recognized as leaders in local food system efforts acknowledge the importance of community partners.[5] In addition to local government staff and local elected officials, we provided several examples of external stakeholder groups and asked respondents to characterize the extent of each's influence on food system activities using one of three categories: primary driver; some influence; none at all.

Respondents to at least part of this series of questions (some did not provide a response for every individual group listed) indicated an average of 1.1 primary drivers, 3.6 groups (of 11 possible) with some influence, and 5.7 (of 11 possible) with no influence [not shown]. Of the respondents, 77% [not shown] identified at least one of the 11 groups exerting at least some influence on food systems activities. As shown in Figure 6, local and national nonprofits were the most commonly-cited primary driver at a rate of 21%; they, along with residents/resident groups (other than official citizen commissions or advisory boards), local government staff, and local government officials were all attributed as having at least some influence by more than 50% of respondents.

Additional Forms of Support

More than 900 local governments indicated they provided at least informal support to food system activities in their communities [not shown]. Of those, about one-third have staff that participate in or lead a food policy council, commission, or similar body.[6] Common types of informal support included providing space for events and programs, lending staff and/or volunteer time, and grant seeking or serving as the fiscal agent on behalf of community programs. Many, though certainly not all, revolved around promoting food access to those in most need. As just one example, the Village of East Dundee, Illinois, pays an annual fee to give their residents access to a particular food bank in the area that offers enhanced selection, better hours, and accessibility via transit.

Nineteen percent of overall respondents indicated they were collaborating with neighboring communities or regions on food activities [not shown]. (See "Collaboration Helps" sidebar.) Sample descriptions of these varied collaborations included city-county or multi-city/county partnerships (including food policy councils), farmers markets, or food distribution for vulnerable populations (food banks, food pantries, Meals on Wheels, etc.).

Finally, as a number of responding local governments cited funding constraints as a challenge to starting or sustaining local food system activities, it may be useful to review findings related to the awareness of, interest in, and actual use of various federal programs available to support food system development (see Figure 7). Responses to this series of questions followed a similar distribution to what we observed in 2012, with local governments most frequently aware of (63%) and using (35%) the Community Development Block Grant pro-

FIGURE 7 ‖ Awareness of, Use of, and Interest in Federal Programs for Food System Development

Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food (n=1,912): Aware 20%, Using 3%, Not Using; Interested 14%

Urban and community forestry programs (n=1,857): Aware 34%, Using 13%, Not Using; Interested 15%

Hunger and nutrition programs (n=1,831): Aware 34%, Using 9%, Not Using; Interested 14%

Marketing assistance (e.g. farmers market or local food promotion program) (n=1,869): Aware 30%, Using 11%, Not Using; Interested 18%

Conservation and working land programs (n=1,855): Aware 28%, Using 8%, Not Using; Interested 14%

Community Facilities Grants (n=1,860): Aware 27%, Using 7%, Not Using; Interested 19%

Rural Business Enterprise or Opportunity Grants (n=1,872): Aware 26%, Using 5%, Not Using; Interested 15%

Community Development Block Grants (HUD) (n=1,983): Aware 63%, Using 35%, Not Using; Interested 8%

Sustainable Communities Grants (HUD-DOT-EPA) (n=1,952): Aware 53%, Using 13%, Not Using; Interested 13%

Brownfields Grants (EPA) (n=1,965): Aware 44%, Using 12%, Not Using; Interested 20%

Communities Putting Prevention to Work, Community Transformation or Partnership to Improve Community Health Grants (CDC) (n=1,934): Aware 15%, Using 4%, Not Using; Interested 17%

Legend: ■ Aware ■ Using ■ Not Using; Interested

gram administered by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development.

Reported usage of the US Department of Agriculture's suite of programs remained relatively modest but consistent since 2012; however, reported interest increased for all types of USDA programs listed, including "Know Your Farmer, Know Your Food"—not a direct support program itself, but rather an umbrella initiative to promote awareness of and access to its specific types of support.

Opportunities Abound

This 2015 study confirms that food systems remain a topic of interest to communities of all types across the country. While not yet an institutionalized (or at least recognized) area of activity for all local governments, results indicate there are many activities common among hundreds of communities of diverse sizes, locations, and forms of government.

A review of sample activities such as those highlighted in this discussion may serve as inspiration for starting or expanding food system efforts in your community. We resist the temptation to label these as best practices, however. Less commonly seen activities, found among the lower ranks of summary figures and not given as much attention in this analysis, may still be worth considering. While you may find fewer models to draw from, some of these examples are arguably more targeted to specific motivations that might align better with your local government's interests and capacity.

We recognize that few if any local governments will engage in all of the activities described here; this was never the assumption in conducting these two studies. However, even when limited, local government support for food systems can be catalytic and complementary to actions of other community partners. Given the many ways food intersects with community well-being and quality of life, it is at least worth considering whether supporting your local food system might serve as a means to an end and merits new or increased attention in your organizational priorities.

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ENDNOTES

1 Laura Goddeeris and Michael W. Hamm, "Local Government Support for Food Systems: An Initial Scan of the Landscape," *The Municipal Year Book 2013* (Washington, D.C.: ICMA Press, 2013), 35-46.

2 Additional information about survey methodology is provided in this summary report: http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/documents/kn/Document/308175/2015_Food_Systems_Survey_Results

3 We revised the 2015 survey to present these possibilities in a more consistent format, which we suspect had some influence over the responses and is useful to keep in mind when comparing results between the two studies.

4 This sample includes any respondent who even partially completed this series of questions.

5 See, for example, Laura Goddeeris, Abigail Rybnicek, and Katherine Takai, *Growing Local Food Systems: A case study series on the role of local governments* (Washington, D.C.: ICMA, 2015),

6 For more on food policy councils and their relationships with local government, see the annual survey conducted by the Food Policy Networks project at the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future: http://www.foodpolicynetworks.org/directory/.

BY LISA SORONEN

SUPREME COURT REVIEW FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Quick roundup of last term's cases affecting cities and counties

The State and Local Legal Center (SLLC) files *amicus curiae* briefs in support of states and local governments in the US Supreme Court on behalf of the "Big Seven" national organizations representing state and local governments. The International City/County Management Association is a member of the SLLC and frequently joins SLLC Supreme Court briefs.

Last term the Supreme Court decided six—arguably seven—"big" cases. Five of those big cases had an impact on local governments in some way. In some of these cases, the bench being down a justice made all the difference, and in at least one case it made no difference at all. Beyond the big cases, the court decided a number of "bread and butter" issues—qualified immunity, Fourth Amendment searches, and public employment— affecting local governments. These and other cases of interest to local governments are summarized in this article. An asterisk indicates those cases for which the SLLC filed an amicus brief.

The "Big" Cases

Non-union public employees paying union dues. In *Friedrichs v. California Teachers Association* (2016), the court issued a 4-4 opinion affirming the lower court's decision to not overrule *Abood v. Detroit Board of Education*

(1977). In *Abood,* the Supreme Court held that the First Amendment does not prevent "agency shop" arrangements—where public employees who do not join the union are still required to pay their "fair share" of union dues for collective-bargaining, contract administration, and grievance adjustment. Since unions may not discriminate between members and nonmembers in performing these functions, agency fees are allowed to ensure nonmembers aren't "free riders."

In two recent cases, *Knox v. SEIU* (2012) and *Harris v. Quinn* (2014), in 5-4 opinions written by Justice Alito and joined by the other conservative justices (including Justice Scalia and Justice Kennedy), the court was very critical of *Abood*. The court heard oral argument in *Friedrichs* in January 2016 before Justice Scalia died, and the five more conservative justices seemed poised to overrule *Abood*. Justice Scalia, who ultimately didn't participate in this case, likely would have voted to overrule *Abood*.

TAKEAWAY: Had the court overruled *Abood*, no public sector union in the country could require nonmembers to pay any dues, representing a radical change in the law in about half of the states.

Redistricting based on total population.

In *Reynold v. Sims* (1964), the court established the principle of "one-person, one-vote" requiring state legislative districts to be apportioned equally. The question in *Evenwel v. Abbott* (2016) was, what population is relevant—total population or voter-eligible population? The maximum total-population deviation between Texas Senate districts was about 8 percent; the maximum voter-eligible population deviation between districts exceeded 40 percent. The unanimous opinion concluding that Texas may redistrict using total population is "based on constitutional history, this court's decisions, and longstanding practice."

Section 2 of the Fourteenth Amendment explicitly requires that the U.S House of Representatives be apportioned based on total population. "It cannot be that the Fourteenth Amendment calls for the apportionment of congressional districts based on total population, but simultaneously prohibits states from apportioning their own legislative districts on the same basis." There have been no previous cases alleging a state or local government failed to comply with "one-person, one-vote" where the court determined a deviation was permissible based on eligible- or registered-voter data. States and local governments redistricting based on total population is a settled practice.

TAKEAWAY: For now, cities and counties may redistrict using any population metric they like. Eventually the Supreme Court will decide whether using voter-eligible population is unconstitutional.

Temporary stay of the Deferred Action Immigration Program. The Supreme Court split 4-4 in *United States v. Texas* (2016) on whether the President's deferred action immigration program violates federal law. As a result, the Fifth Circuit's nationwide temporary stay of the program remains in effect. The Deferred Action for Parents of Americans (DAPA) program allows certain undocumented immigrants who have lived in the United States for five years, and either came here as children or already have children who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents, to lawfully stay and work temporarily in the United States.

Before the Fifth Circuit, several states challenged DAPA as violating the Administrative Procedures Act (APA) notice-and-comment requirement and claimed it is arbitrary and capricious in violation of the APA. The Fifth Circuit concluded the states were likely to succeed on both claims. It reasoned DAPA is a substantive rule, requiring the public to have the opportunity to offer comments, not a policy statement. The Fifth Circuit concluded DAPA is likely arbitrary and capricious because

it is "foreclosed by Congress's careful plan" in the Immigration and Nationality Act for "how parents may derive an immigration classification on the basis of their child's status and which classes of aliens can achieve deferred action and eligibility for work authorization."

The United States had also argued that the states lacked "standing" to challenge DAPA. The Fifth Circuit disagreed, reasoning that the cost of issuing drivers licenses to DAPA program participants is a particular harm states will face, which provides the basis for standing.

TAKEAWAY: Many local governments feel strongly about keeping families with undocumented members together. The National League of Cities and the U.S. Conference of Mayors joined an *amicus* brief in this case supporting the United States.

Race-conscious admissions program ruled constitutional. In *Fisher v. University of Texas at Austin* (2016), the court ruled 4-3 that the University of Texas at Austin's race-conscious admissions program is constitutional. Per Texas's Top Ten Percent Plan, the top ten percent of Texas high school graduates are automatically admitted to the University of Texas at Austin (UT Austin), filling up to 75 percent of the class. Other students are admitted based on a combination of their grades, test scores, and "personal achievement index." Race is considered as one factor in one of the two components of an applicant's "personal achievement index."

UT Austin denied Abigail Fisher, a white Texan who did not graduate in the top ten percent of her class, admission. Fisher sued, claiming the university's use of race in admissions violates the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause.

The court rejected Fisher's four arguments that UT Austin's admissions policy isn't narrowly tailored. Fisher first claimed the university should have specified more precisely what level of minority enrollment would constitute a "critical mass." The court responded that critical mass isn't a number and that the university articulated "concrete and precise goals" about the "educational values it [sought] to realize" through its race-conscious admissions process. Second, the court rejected the argument that the university had already achieved a critical mass of minority students using the Top Ten Percent Plan. Between 1996 and 2002, when race wasn't a factor in admissions, minority enrollment stagnated.

The court disagreed with Fisher's argument that the use of race had only a minimal impact on minority enrollment. Between 2003 and 2007, when race was considered, Hispanic and African-American enrollment increased

54 percent and 94 percent, respectively. Finally, the court rejected Fisher's argument that UT Austin could have used numerous race-neutral means of achieving more diversity. The court noted that the university had tried many of her suggestions but they hadn't increased minority enrollment.

TAKEAWAY: The Robert's court has generally disfavored race-conscious decision making. This is the first time an education institution has won an affirmative action case since *Grutter v. Bollinger* (2003).

What doesn't qualify as "official act" subject to federal bribery charges. In *McDonnell v. United States* (2016), the Supreme Court unanimously reversed former Virginia Governor Robert McDonnell's bribery conviction. The court held that setting up meetings, calling other public officials, and hosting events do not alone qualify as "official acts." While in office McDonnell accepted more than $175,000 in loans, gifts, and other benefits from Jonnie Williams. Williams wanted a Virginia state university to test a dietary supplement, Anatabloc, developed by his company, Star Scientific. Federal bribery statutes make it a crime for public officials to "receive or accept anything of value" in exchange for being "influenced in the performance of any *official act.*"

The federal government claimed McDonnell committed at least five official acts, including arranging for Williams to meet with Virginia government officials; recommending that senior government officials meet with Star executives; hosting and attending events at the governor's mansion designed to encourage Virginia university researchers to study Anatabloc; and allowing Williams to invite individuals important to Star's business to exclusive events at the governor's mansion.

An "official act" is defined as "any decision or action on any question, matter, cause, suit, proceeding or controversy, which may at any time be pending, or which may by law be brought before any public official, in such official's official capacity, or in such official's place of trust or profit."

The court found a number of "questions or matters" in this case, including whether researchers at a Virginia university would study Anatabloc. But merely setting up a meeting, hosting an event, or calling another official does not qualify as a "decision or action" on any of these questions or matters.

TAKEAWAY: It will be interesting to see whether state legislatures tighten up state bribery laws following this decision.

Qualified Immunity

In *Mullenix v. Luna* (2015), Israel Leija Jr. led officers on an 18-minute chase at speeds between 85 and 110 miles an hour after officers tried to arrest him. Leija called police twice saying he had a gun and would shoot police officers if they did not abandon their pursuit. While officers set up spike strips under an overpass, Officer Mullenix asked his supervisor via dispatch if his supervisor thought shooting at Leija's car to disable it was "worth doing." His supervisor told Officer Mullenix to wait to see if the spike strips worked.

Officer Mullenix then learned an officer was in harm's way from Leija beneath the overpass. Officer Mullenix shot at Leija's vehicle six times killing him but not disabling his vehicle. Leija's estate sued Officer Mullenix claiming that he violated the Fourth Amendment by using excessive force.

The court concluded Officer Mullenix should be granted qualified immunity, stating: "Given Leija's conduct, we cannot say that only someone 'plainly incompetent' or who 'knowingly violate[s] the law' would have perceived a sufficient threat and acted as Mullenix did."

TAKEAWAY: This case has many facts unfavorable to the police officer. Nevertheless the Supreme Court rules in favor of him, illustrating how favorable the qualified immunity is to local governments.

Fourth Amendment

A police officer stopped Edward Streiff after he left a suspected drug house. The officer discovered Streiff had an outstanding warrant, searched him (legally), and discovered he was carrying illegal drugs. The court held 5-3 in *Utah v. Strieff* (2016) that even though the initial stop was illegal, the drug evidence could be admissible against Streiff in a trial. Per the attenuation doctrine (which is an exception to the exclusionary rule), "[e]vidence is admissible when the connection between unconstitutional police conduct [here the illegal stop] and the evidence is remote or has been interrupted by some intervening circumstance [here finding the warrant]."

The court first concluded that the discovery of a valid, pre-existing, untainted arrest warrant triggered the attenuation doctrine. The court, applying a three-factor test articulated in *Brown v. Illinois (*1975), then concluded that the discovery of the warrant "was [a] sufficient intervening event to break the causal chain" between the unlawful stop and the discovery of drugs. Proximity in time between the initially unlawful stop and the search favored suppressing the evidence. But the other factors in this case, "intervening circumstances" and the lack of purposeful and flagrant

police misconduct, weighed strongly in favor of the state. The warrant was an intervening factor in this case because it was valid, it predated the stop, and it was entirely unconnected to the stop.

TAKEAWAY: This case received an unusual amount of attention largely because of Justice Sotomayor's very personal dissent discussing, among other thing, how common outstanding warrants are in some communities like Ferguson, Missouri.

In *Birchfield v. North Dakota* (2016),* the court held 5-3 that states may criminalize an arrestee's refusal to take a warrantless *breath* test. If states criminalize the refusal to take a blood test, police must obtain a warrant. Per the search-incident-to-arrest exception, police officers are allowed to search an arrestee's person, without first obtaining a warrant, to protect officer safety or evidence. To determine if this exception applies, the court weighed the degree to which the search "intrudes upon an individual's privacy" with the need to promote "legitimate government interests."

The court concluded the privacy intrusion of breath tests was minimal but the privacy intrusion of blood tests was not. "[W]hile humans exhale air from their lungs many times per minute, humans do not continually shed blood." For this reason the court concluded if states criminalize the refusal to take a *blood* test, police must obtain a warrant.

TAKEAWAY: Local governments in states that criminalize arrestee's refusal to take a warrantless test must educate their police force on the implications of this ruling.

Public Employment

In *Heffernan v. City of Paterson*, New Jersey (2016),* the court held 6-2 that a public employer violates the First Amendment when it acts on a *mistaken* belief that an employee engaged in First Amendment protected political activity. Police officer Jeffery Heffernan worked in the office of the police chief. The mayor was running for reelection against a friend of Heffernan's, Lawrence Spagnola. Heffernan was demoted after another member of the police force saw Heffernan picking up a Spagnola yard sign and talking to the Spagnola campaign manager and staff. Heffernan was picking up the sign for his bedridden mother.

The court agreed that Heffernan has a First Amendment claim even though he engaged in no political activity protected by the First Amendment, because the city's motive was to retaliate against Heffernan for political activity. In *Waters v. Churchill* (1994), the employer mistakenly believed the employee engaged in personal

gossip rather than protected speech on a matter of public concern. The court upheld the employee's dismissal focusing on the employer's motive.

TAKEAWAY: Fortunately the issue of an employer mistakenly believing that an employee engaged in First Amendment protected political activity does not arise very often.

Miscellaneous

Approved jurisdictional determination. In *United States Army Corp of Engineers v. Hawkes* (2016),* the court ruled unanimously that an approved jurisdictional determination that property contains "waters of the United States" may be immediately reviewed in court. Per the Clean Water Act, "waters of the United States" (WOTUS) are federally regulated. Property owners may seek an approved jurisdictional determination (JD) from the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers definitively stating whether such waters are present or absent on a particular parcel of land.

Per the Administrative Procedures Act, judicial review may be sought only from final agency actions. Per *Bennett v. Spear* (1997), agency action is final when it marks the consummation of the agency's decision-making process and when legal consequences flow from the action. The court concluded that an approved JD is a final agency action subject to court review because it meets both conditions laid out in *Bennett*. The Corp didn't argue that an approved JD is tentative; its regulations describe approved JDs as "final agency action" valid for five years. Approved JDs give rise to "direct and appreciable legal consequences," the court reasoned, because the Corp and the EPA (through a long-standing agreement) are bound by them for five years. So per an approved JD, the two agencies authorized to bring civil enforcement proceedings under the Clean Water Act may, practically speaking, grant or deny a property owner a five-year safe harbor from such proceedings.

TAKEAWAY: The local government interest in this case may not be obvious. But often cities and counties own land they seek to develop and/or want to make planning decisions regarding roads, sewers, and the like when, as in this case, a private company wants to build a business.

Asset forfeitures. In a 6-2 decision in *Luis v. United States* (2015),* the court ruled that the Sixth Amendment right to counsel includes allowing a criminal defendant to use *untainted* assets to hire an attorney, rather than freezing them for potential forfeiture to the government after conviction. Sila Luis was charged with fraudulently obtaining

nearly $45 million in Medicare funds. She claimed she has a Sixth Amendment right to use the untainted portion of the $2 million in assets remaining in her possession to hire an attorney of her choice.

The court agreed in a plurality opinion. It distinguished two previous cases where it held that a post-conviction defendant (*Caplin & Drysdale v. United States* [1989]) and a pre-trial defendant (*United States v. Monsanto* [1989]) could not use *tainted* assets to pay an attorney. "The distinction between [tainted and untainted assets] is…an important one, not a technicality. It is the difference between what is yours and what is mine." The court then applied a balancing test weighing the defendant's "fundamental" right to assistance of counsel with the government's interest in punishment through criminal forfeiture and victims' interest in restitution. The balance favored the interest of the accused because the interests in criminal forfeiture and restitution aren't constitutionally protected.

TAKEAWAY: Local governments often receive asset forfeitures where local police officers participate in the investigation and arrests.

Stun gun ban and Second Amendment. In a *per curiam* (unauthored) opinion, the court ordered the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts to decide again whether Massachusetts's stun gun ban is constitutional. Currently, eight states and a handful of cities and counties ban stun guns. The highest state court in Massachusetts held that the Second Amendment doesn't protect stun guns, because they weren't in common use at the time the Second Amendment was enacted—they are "unusual" as "a thoroughly modern invention," and they aren't readily adaptable for use in the military.

In *District of Columbia v. Heller* (2008), the court ruled that the Second Amendment provides an individual the right to possess a firearm to use for lawful purposes, including for self-defense, in the home. In *Heller,* the court concluded that the Second Amendment extends to arms "that were not in existence at the time of the founding." In its two-page decision in *Caetano v. Massachusetts* (2016), the court notes that the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts ignores this "clear statement" in *Heller*. A gun cannot be considered "unusual" just because it is a modern invention. And *Heller* "rejected the proposition 'that only those weapons useful in warfare are protected.'"

TAKEAWAY: This case is of interest to local governments because a number of cities and counties also ban stun guns.
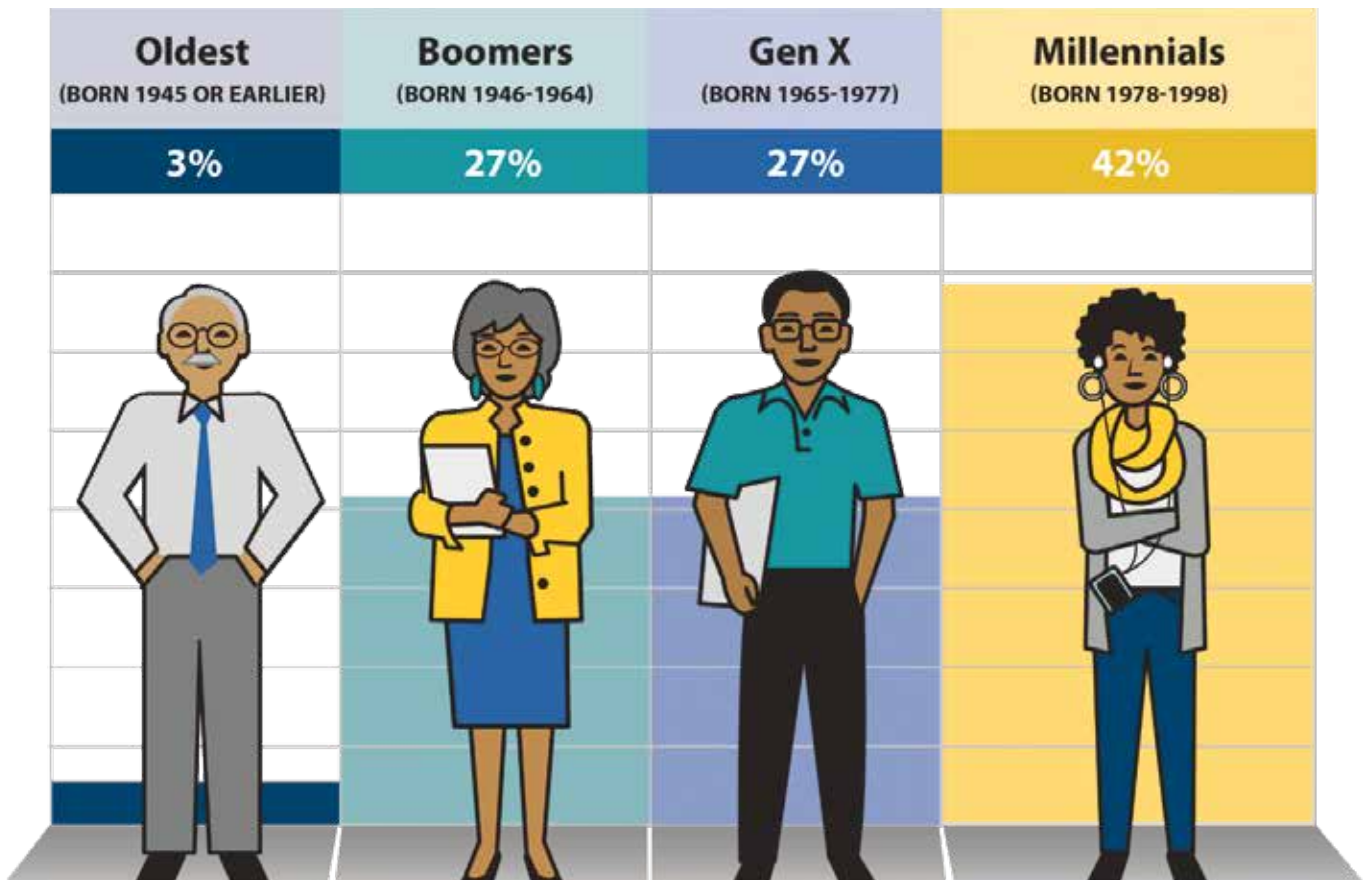
What's Next

The Supreme Court has accepted three cases of interest to local governments to be decided during its 2016-2017 term. The issue in *Wells Fargo v. City of Miami* and *Bank of America v. City of Miami* is whether cities have standing to sue banks under the Fair Housing Act over loses cities have experienced caused by discriminatory lending practices. In *Manuel v. City of Joliet* the court will decide whether it is possible to bring malicious prosecution claims under the Fourth Amendment possible. The question in *Murr v. Wisconsin* is whether merger provisions in state law and local ordinances, where nonconforming, adjacent lots under common ownership are combined for zoning purposes, may result in the unconstitutional taking of property.

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Oldest (BORN 1945 OR EARLIER)	Boomers (BORN 1946-1964)	Gen X (BORN 1965-1977)	Millennials (BORN 1978-1998)
3%	27%	27%	42%

U.S. Working Population: 2020 Projection
17% will be 56-74 years old; 27% will be 43 -55 years old; 56% will be 18-42% years old.

Why Local Governments Are
Talking about Millennials

Shifting demographics make succession planning a high priority

BY ELIZABETH KELLAR

Demographic shifts explain why organizations are paying so much attention to Millennials. In just four years, people born in 1978 or later will make up 56 percent of the workforce. The percentage of baby boomers—27 percent of the workforce in 2016—will decline to 17 percent in 2020, and Gen X will hold steady at 27 percent of the workforce.
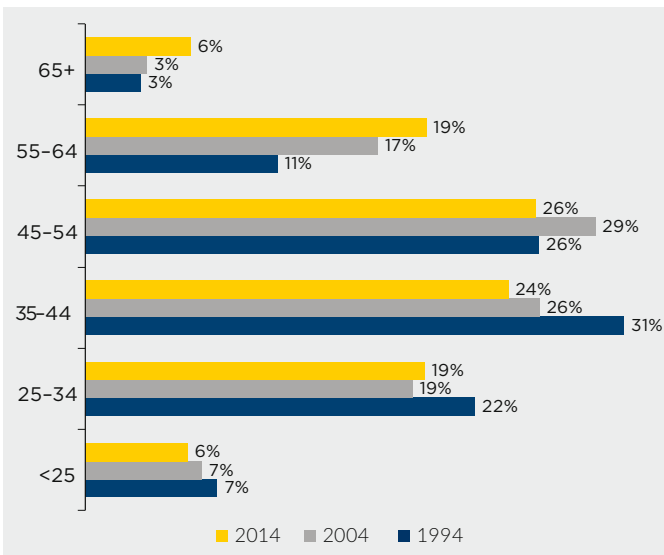
How does today's local government workforce stack up with these broader demographic shifts? The average age of the local government worker today is 45, three years older than his or her private-sector counterpart. Twenty-five percent of local government workers are 55 years of age or older. As these older workers reach retirement age, more opportunities open up for younger workers. There also is more competition for well-educated, experienced, and skilled candidates.

A number of underlying trends and issues add to recruitment challenges:

- Fewer affordable housing choices
- Less generous benefits for new hires

Age Ranges of the Local Government Workforce

Legend: 2014, 2004, 1994

Age	2014	2004	1994
65+	6%	3%	3%
55–64	19%	17%	11%
45–54	26%	29%	26%
35–44	24%	26%	31%
25–34	19%	19%	22%
<25	6%	7%	7%

Source: SLGE analysis of https://cps.ipums.org/cps/0

- Fewer younger workers employed in local government
- Some younger workers come from families or cultures without a tradition of public sector work
- Increased level of education and skills required for jobs

- Low unemployment rate, especially for educated workers (in July 2016, 2.5 percent unemployment for those with a Bachelor of Arts degree).
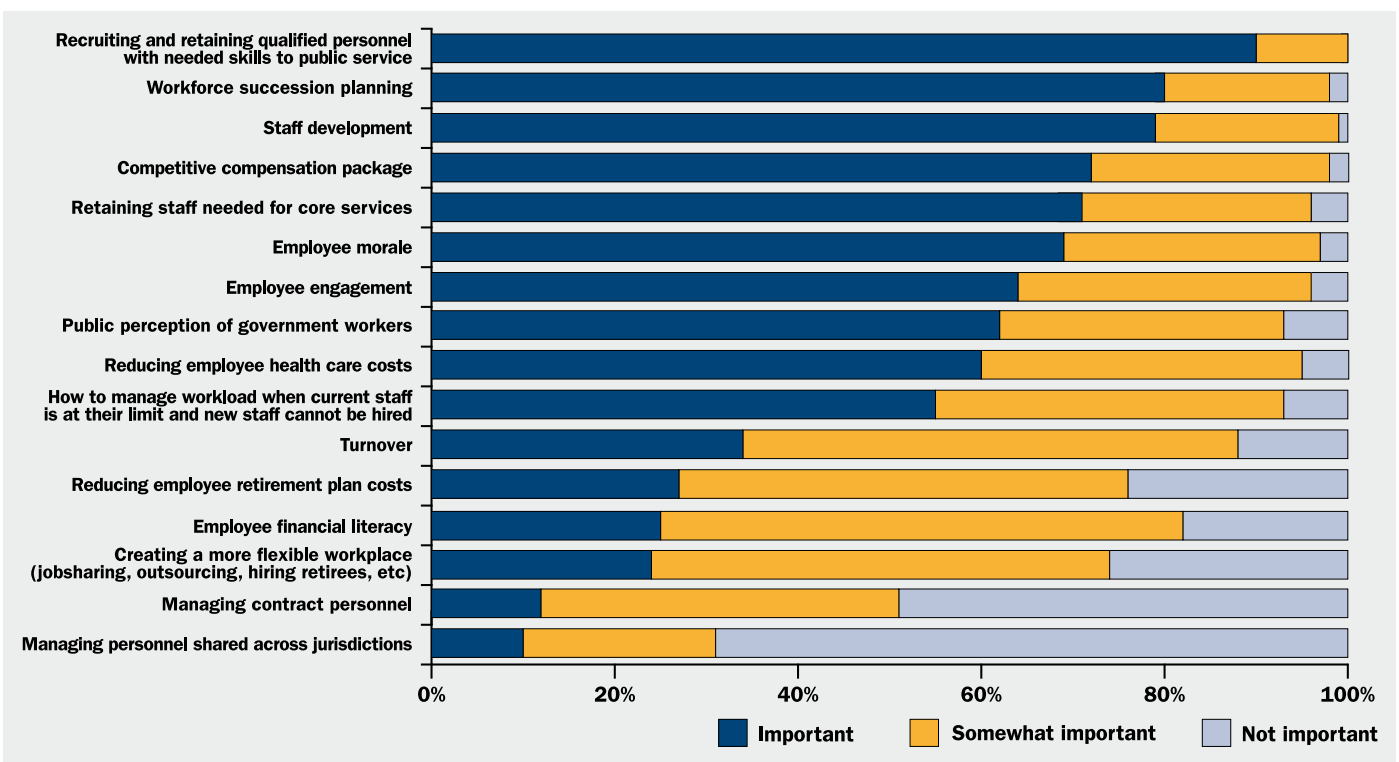
With an aging workforce and more competition for talent, it is not surprising that the top issue in the 2016 Center for State and Local Government Excellence's (SLGE) annual workforce trends report is recruitment and retention.[1]

What Do Younger Workers Want?

Younger workers expect flexible work environments, quick responses to the job applications, up-to-date technology tools, and continuous feedback. To find out more about the career plans and preferences of the future local government workforce, SLGE distributed an online survey to students from Arizona State University, the University of North Carolina, the University of Washington, the University of Kansas, and the University of Colorado Denver in May 2015. SLGE also sent the survey to ICMA student chapters. A total of 185 students completed the survey.
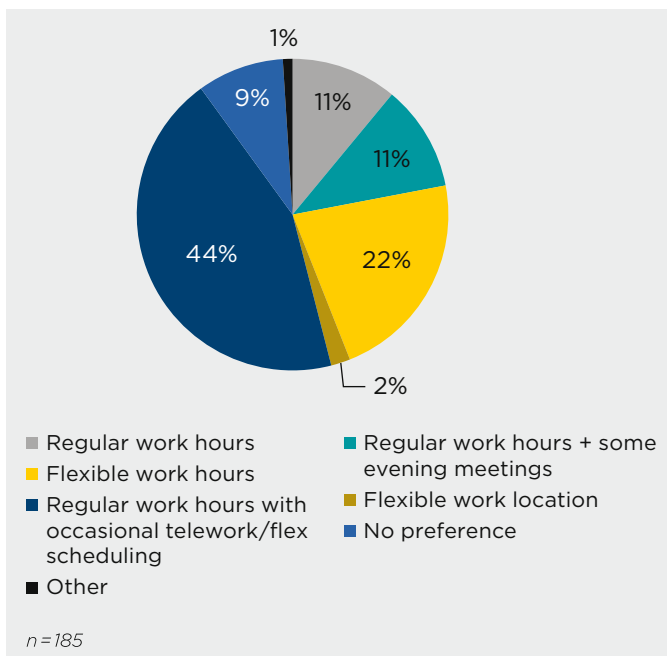
A majority of respondents (75 percent) were pursuing a Master of Public Administration, and 11 percent were working on a Bachelor of Science degree. More than half of the respondents (56 percent) had a favorable opinion of local government and 36 percent had a very favorable opinion. Not surprisingly, 80 percent of these respondents

Looking ahead, which workforce issue are important to your organization? (n=330)

Legend: Important, Somewhat important, Not important

Source: State and Local Government Workforce: 2016 Trends.

Job Schedule Preferences

Regular work hours — 11%
Regular work hours + some evening meetings — 11%
Flexible work hours — 22%
Flexible work location — 2%
Regular work hours with occasional telework/flex scheduling — 44%
No preference — 9%
Other — 1%

Legend:
- ■ Regular work hours
- ■ Flexible work hours
- ■ Regular work hours with occasional telework/flex scheduling
- ■ Other
- ■ Regular work hours + some evening meetings
- ■ Flexible work location
- ■ No preference

n = 185

Source: Workforce of Tomorrow, *Center for State and Local Government and Local Government Research Collaborative, December 2015*

plan to or say they may pursue local government career opportunities.[2]

When these future local government professionals assess career opportunities, 75 percent rank the ability to achieve professional goals and 72 percent rank making a contribution to society as the most important factors. When they are job hunting, they rate these attributes as most important:

- Competitive salary (59 percent)
- Opportunity to make a difference (58 percent)
- Opportunities for promotion/advancement (57 percent)
- Work-life balance (52 percent).[3]

Asked about their job schedule preferences, 44 percent prefer regular work hours with occasional telework or flex scheduling, and 22 percent prefer flexible work hours.[4]

Competing for Talent

While local governments may not be able to match private sector salaries, they offer attractive benefits and meaningful work. Most local governments need to do a more effective job in marketing their organization as a great place to work, write appealing job ads, use social media more effectively, and streamline their recruitment practices.

Local governments offer meaningful work that makes a difference in people's lives. Making sure that current employees see opportunities to learn and grow is just as important as bringing new employees into the organization. Engaged employees who have good supervisory skills are essential to bringing new talent into the organization.

With the aging local government workforce, succession planning is a top priority,[5] yet only 27 percent of human resources managers say they are doing it, according to Neil Reichenberg, executive director, International Public Management Association for Human Resources.[6]

The dramatic shift in generations requires a disciplined approach to ensure that local governments have the talent they need to meet society's needs. Government leaders need to examine their current demographics, talent gaps, and development needs and craft a succession plan that helps their organizations be better prepared for the changes ahead.

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ENDNOTES

1 *State and Local Government Workforce: 2016 Trends.* Survey findings of the members of the International Public Management Association for Human Resources and the National Association of State Personnel Executives, conducted by the Center for State and Local Government Excellence, May 2016.

2 Kellar, Elizabeth; Franzel, Joshua; Snowden, Amber, and Becker, Christine, *Workforce of Tomorrow*, p. 25, Local Government Research Collaborative and the Center for State and Local Government Excellence, December 2015.

3 Ibid, p 27.

4 Ibid, p. 28.

5 *State and Local Government Workforce: 2016 Trends.*

6 SLGE Retirement Security Summit, "The New Social Contract with Employees," June 11, 2015 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vv-J2mkdkI8.

![ICMA logo]

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