

# PM

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

## SHARED SERVICES & COST-SAVING COLLABORATION DESERVE RESPECT

ONE COG'S  
COLLABORATION  
RECIPE HAS PROVED  
EXTREMELY USEFUL

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# A **HOLISTIC** APPROACH TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT MANAGEMENT CONSULTING



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*Leaders at the Core of Better Communities*

## cover story



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## SHARED SERVICES & COST-SAVING COLLABORATION DESERVE RESPECT

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[icma.org/pm](http://icma.org/pm)

This issue of *PM* is available online  
at [icma.org/pm](http://icma.org/pm) May 1, 2011.

# WE'RE HAPPY TO REPORT . . .

**N**early 700 readers responded to the *PM* magazine survey conducted this past October (a 7.7 percent response rate), and we'd like to publicly thank those individuals for investing their time in the magazine. Each person who completed the survey was eligible for a drawing to win a \$50 gift card, and Cory Smith, city administrator, Grandview, Missouri, was that winner.

Naturally, we on the staff love seeing the positive ratings and remarks of the majority of respondents. Especially rewarding is that the percentages of respondents who agree or strongly agree that "*PM* magazine content meets my needs" and "articles are relevant to my job" increased in the 2010 survey compared with the 2008 survey, as did the percentages who say they read the magazine either cover to cover or "most of the articles."

The many write-in responses and suggestions offer a wealth of insight and support that would be the envy of magazine editors everywhere. While the editor's challenge is to balance the opinion of a single voice with multiple voices, it's in these comments that creative ideas—and even practical ones—emerge. This short list will give you a flavor of our food for thought:

- The most frequently occurring comment recommended that *PM* publish more nuts-and-bolts articles.
- A number of respondents requested that we gear a section of the magazine to regions of the country. One respondent described this as "a region-specific section that addresses high-profile challenges facing local government managers."
- Some respondents want more articles or a recurring column on issues faced by smaller local governments.
- Several want to read articles that include war stories, advice to young managers, and personal perspectives and experiences. One person described this as "articles for those just starting their careers . . . from different managers in various size local governments about how they deal with their job and what issues they encounter."
- Comments about article length were mixed—from "Keep to two pages" to "Give your readers some credit as to their intellect and willingness to read long articles of text." One respondent suggested adding a crossword at the end of the issue, and one suggested we run management-related cartoons.
- Another described what could be an interesting perspective piece: taking the stance that not everything can be managed, this respondent suggested that some things just need to be done well without thinking of it as management.
- Supporting the favorable rating that the magazine received for its diversity of voices, one respondent asked that we bring back "outside professionals to give us a different perspective."

With the advent of new technologies, we are more than ever before considering how in the future the magazine can be delivered to accommodate the interests and needs of its readership. Survey respondents are for the most part ready to read a mobile or digital version of the magazine, and our challenge is to make these technology-related decisions in alignment with all of ICMA's strategic priorities and resource allocations.

We also received 116 responses to the question about "what one change" would compel you to read *PM*. As you might imagine, there were close to 116 different answers. It's all a lot to consider in the coming months, but bringing your ideas to life on the pages of the magazine is what makes our jobs so rewarding! **PM**



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**Because you can't always predict where  
an accident will end up. Or where it'll begin.**

From road construction to parks and recreation, we understand that you're responsible for a wide range of public projects. And for those days when one of them unexpectedly veers off course, you can count on Travelers. Trust us to be your partner in protecting the public: pairing our specialized risk control and claim resources with local knowledge of your community's unique needs. Because when so much depends on you, you should be able to depend on customized protection that's anything but middle of the road. Wherever that may be.

**TRAVELERS** 



BY MARTHA PEREGO, ICMA-CM

## STRANGE BUT TRUE

Relying on the profession's values leads to ethical decisions

Unprecedented and peculiar ethical situations come up in local government. And because they are so unusual, the ICMA Code of Ethics sometimes does not offer a guideline that is "spot on." Reaching an ethically correct solution requires us to look at and think carefully about the core principles of the code and the intent of those principles.

Here is just a sample of the strange but true situations for which ICMA members sought guidance.

### Impeachable Offenses

A city manager was asked to serve on a fact-finding panel in the process of impeachment of a councilmember in another city. The city also extended invitations to an attorney who represents local governments and to a retired elected official.

The city, after struggling for years with improper conduct by elected officials, including this particular councilmember, had created a process for impeachment. Current plans are to take this individual through the process that ultimately would result in a recommendation by council subject to voter approval. The panel would not be required to reach any determination

about whether the councilmember's conduct violated the city charter.

The city manager who received the request to serve is so far removed from the situation, physically and otherwise, that it would be obvious to a reasonable person that she was selected for her expertise on the subject. She clearly doesn't have a stake in the outcome. Also, presenting factual information about the councilmember's conduct is not the same as declaring whether the person is fit for office.

Intuitively, though, the manager knew that she should decline this invitation. In framing a response, she considered the profession's commitment to political neutrality. Managers and professionals working in local government should refrain from all political activities that undermine public confidence in the profession. Even the possibility that the manager would be drawn into a dialogue about whether this councilmember was worthy of holding public office seemed to violate the intent of the principle of political neutrality.

### Divided Loyalties

City council was extremely pleased with the performance of the city's contract engineer and grew to rely on him for advice about operations and other city

# PM

PUBLIC MANAGEMENT

*Public Management (PM)* aims to inspire innovation, inform decision making, connect leading-edge thinking to everyday challenges, and serve ICMA members and local governments worldwide in the pursuit of excellence in local governance.

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matters. The council decided to enter into an agreement with the engineer's firm to have him also provide services as the city manager. The agreement was formally approved at a council meeting.

The firm continued to get work at the recommendation of the "city manager/engineer." A year or so into the arrangement, questions arose about the performance of the city manager/engineer with regard to a water and sewer expansion to a newly annexed area. Several residents filed suit over property damages; the

took to address improper conduct by a department director. The city manager stood his ground against what he viewed as encroachment by the council on his official duties.

Following a public discussion about this dispute, the council voted to suspend the manager with pay for four months. What's the calculus behind arriving at a four-month suspension? Four months took the manager to the end of his contract. Following this action, the council sought to hire an interim manager.

## REACHING AN ETHICALLY CORRECT SOLUTION REQUIRES US TO LOOK AT AND THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THE CORE PRINCIPLES OF THE CODE AND THE INTENT OF THOSE PRINCIPLES.

project was over budget, off schedule, and headed into nightmare territory.

At the surface, two key principles of the ICMA Code of Ethics appear to be in conflict. The decisions of the elected officials should be respected and honored; yet, the individual in this case has an ethical obligation to seek no favor and avoid conflicts of interest. This arrangement clearly created a conflict of interest that won't be cured except by terminating the arrangement. Even if it was blessed by the governing body, it's unethical.

A city or county manager, accountable solely to the governing body, can in some situations serve several roles within the organization. That works because there is clear accountability. The situation above is unethical because the individual charged with ultimate responsibility for oversight of city projects—the city manager, in other words—has no clear accountability and has a personal financial stake in the decisions that he makes. Whose interests are served by his decisions? The public's or his employer's?

Are ICMA members in ethical jeopardy if they apply for the interim position? The code does have a guideline that advises members not to seek employment for a position when the incumbent has not resigned or been officially informed of termination. In this case, there had been official action on the suspension but no action on a termination.

The code guideline exists to ensure that the elected body will deal properly with the incumbent before selecting a replacement. In this case, the council made the decision that a four-month paid suspension was okay. Is it conscionable for the profession to allow a city to go without professional guidance for four months?

The council has the option of appointing an interim manager from within. But ICMA members who value the principles of the code should not serve as interim manager until the final decision has been made about the future of the incumbent. **PM**



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### In Limbo

The council ordered the city manager to rescind a disciplinary action the manager



## AS A MANAGER, WHAT'S THE BEST BUDGET ADVICE YOU WERE EVER GIVEN?



**ROBERT BRUSCHI**  
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I have always thought of municipal budgeting in much the same way as I think about budgeting at home. There are things that you want or perceive you need to buy for some reason, like a new car or a new television. Many times, however, the wants and needs do not become realized because of the financial realities of the purchase.

So here's the budgeting advice that was shared with me years ago as a young manager, and it is advice and a philosophy that I've maintained with my management team members: Request and spend every government dollar as if it were your own.

Then when you evaluate whether you need a full-size, four-wheel-drive SUV in your community, perhaps you will find that the less expensive one will do the trick and cost less to operate. You are more likely to make the correct decision when you consider a local government's money as if it were coming from your own bank account.



**DUANE COLE, ICMA-CM**  
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Early in my career I was a finance director. I was having a difficult time providing accurate information in those precomputer, spreadsheet days. Especially difficult were developing payroll estimates and reconciling input from the departments.

One late afternoon, I was called to the city manager's office, and I thought my job was ending. Instead, he advised me to be precise by slowing down, fully develop the supporting details on additional spreadsheets, and check my work.

Since that time, even now with the technology advancements we have today, I have found that it is better to be slow and accurate than fast and wrong.



**SUSAN ARNTZ, ICMA-CM**  
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I have always used the advice that, when preparing a budget, always communicate the entire picture and provide context for decisions. The context is more important than the content; it provides a deeper understanding for the decisions that need to be made from multiple perspectives.

Financial plans, organizational goals, feedback both internal and external, and many other things can provide context that will assist in making financial decisions. Understanding the context can create stronger leadership around budgeting decisions.



**ANITA FAVORS THOMPSON**  
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The best budget advice I've ever been given came from a Tallahassee resident two years ago. The economy was in a downward swirl, revenues were limited due to statewide tax reform, and the city was facing major layoffs for the first time ever.

I was talking about our budget woes with a local 80-year-old, a spunky, former businesswoman with a charming southern accent. When I asked her what her thoughts were about the best way to engage the community in conversations about how to make budget cuts, she thought a minute and politely said: "That's why we hired you, dear. I do not wish to have the responsibility of figuring out how to make this dilemma work. Like everything else in life, you just have to suck it up and keep our city moving." Of course she was absolutely right, and of course, that is exactly what we did! The bottom line is that we, as the professionals hired to do the job, have to open every door to assure that we continue to provide excellent services with whatever resources we have. **PM**



# 1

## INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IMPROVE FIREFIGHTER SAFETY

Firefighters in Dire Dawa, Ethiopia, will work more safely thanks to a donation of protective gear spearheaded by a Florida fire chief and facilitated by ICMA.

► [icma.org/firegear](http://icma.org/firegear)



# 2

## JUSTIFIED RETURNS

Nearly one-third of the energy used to run typical government buildings goes to waste. Check your energy management strategies and save both energy and money with some no-cost tools.

► [icma.org/en/icma/knowledge\\_network/topics/topic/87](http://icma.org/en/icma/knowledge_network/topics/topic/87)



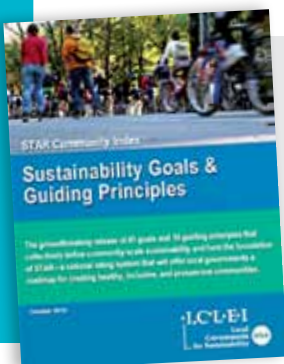
## ON COMMON GROUND

When a community is considering adding a skate park as a recreational option, three main issues need to be considered: construction, safety, and administration.

► [icma.org/skateparkdesign](http://icma.org/skateparkdesign)



# 4



## SUSTAINABILITY GUIDE

*Sustainability Goals and Guiding Principles* handbook provides 81 sustainability goals and 10 guiding principles that help show how communities can become more healthy, inclusive, and prosperous.

► [icma.org/sustainprinciples\\_handbook](http://icma.org/sustainprinciples_handbook)

By Monte Mercer

# SHARED SERVICES & COST-SAVING COLLABORATION DESERVE RESPECT

ONE COG's  
COLLABORATION  
RECIPE HAS PROVED  
EXTREMELY USEFUL





## TAKEAWAYS

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- › Learn a tested and proven shared services/public-private partnerships “recipe” with a focus on serving an organization’s greatest needs.
  - › Discover the importance of being a solution center and offering programs and innovations that address organizational needs, while also allowing an organization to be a driving force in the process.
  - › Discover the advantages of shared services programs that can help an organization achieve its own successes.
- 

**S**hared services, many of which are public-private partnerships (PPPs), refer to the operational philosophy that involves centralizing functions once performed by individual organizations. In day-to-day operations, problems and opportunities arise that are ideal for collaboration. This abundance of possible shared services and partnership opportunities can be overwhelming though, and it can lead to difficulty identifying which projects to try. The best determining factor for success is for the customer to be the driving force behind any collaborative effort.

The North Central Texas Council of Governments (NCTCOG) serves 240 member governments—or customers—of which 170 are cities. It has had the opportunity to spearhead a large number of shared services and PPP initiatives in recent years, and in this article I want to share what we’ve learned.

In fact, shared services fulfill NCTCOG’s mission to strengthen the individual and collective power of local governments and to help them recognize regional opportunities, resolve regional problems, and make joint decisions. These initiatives are primarily designed to solve common needs of NCTCOG’s member governments, but they often reach a statewide audience as well.

### **Steps for a Successful Collaboration**

A common recipe for success can be applied to any collaboration effort. By nature, however, shared services are unique and have elements that will apply exclusively to each individual project. For projects to be successful, it is best to tailor an approach that takes individual differences into consideration for each shared services program.

After identifying a problem or opportunity that can be remedied through a shared services approach and also identifying the local government stakeholders, NCTCOG then takes the next step in the process and functions as the coordinating organization. This is followed by determining which entity or entities—also called organizations in this article—can serve as a project champion. Project champions need to be recognized leaders within the stakeholder community because they are crucial for the success of any shared services project, as they lend both credibility and energy to the project.

## Create a Winning Approach

When deciding whether a proposed shared services project is feasible to pursue, NCTCOG and the prospective participants use these criteria:

- Does it have the potential to save money?
- Does it have the potential to provide equal or better service levels?
- Can a governance structure or operational process be devised that assures that the participating local governments share in the control of the program?

If these questions can be answered in the affirmative, then we proceed to the next step.

## Developing the Request for Proposals

The request for proposals (RFP) process begins with research by the planning organization, the project champions, and any other entity that desires to participate in identifying potential solutions to the chosen problem or opportunity. This leads to an understanding of the project dynamics and sets the stage for initial discussions with prospective private and public sector service providers. Conversations with service providers allow insight into opportunities for standardization and other cost-saving measures while validating the parameters necessary to create a credible RFP.

Identifying opportunities for standardization is one of the most important due-diligence steps, and it should be performed collectively. The 80-20 rule is a good guide for assessing opportunities for standardization. In other words, ferret out the things that each participant does in common 80 percent of the time so that they can be the focal point for maximizing

efficiencies and economies of scale.

After this step is accomplished, it is essential to visit with the potential service providers and get their input and understanding of the program being suggested. Doing this allows potential failure points to be exposed.

It is recommended that a significant amount of time be spent with the subject matter experts (SMEs) and the technical experts from potential service providers during this step. Opportunities for cost savings using this approach will generally be significant.

Our experience has been that an element vital to crafting the RFP is understanding how the private or public sector provider will deliver the service. If the procurement is based solely on our understanding of the problem and the solution, we may inadvertently limit the opportunities to provide a more innovative and cost-effective approach to solving the problem.

When the due diligence has been performed, a nonbinding statement of interest is sent to potential users of the service. After these statements are returned, this information will be summarized for the RFP. One critical piece of information for the responders is an indication of the volume of activity or transactions that can be anticipated, as this will be important as pricing discounts are considered.

Participation usually far exceeds the initial statements of interest that are returned. As the RFP is developed, it may take several iterations to reach a version that satisfies all groups; therefore, maintaining some flexibility will allow for creative responses. The RFP should also be scalable to various group sizes. After the RFP draft is completed, it needs to be reviewed by the participants or a representative committee to create the official version.

It is helpful for the committee to be composed of SMEs. For best results, they should be from various-sized entities in order to gain varying perspectives concerning the shared services initiative.

After responses to the RFP have been received, a selection committee should meet to review the submittals. RFPs should be scored on the basis of predetermined selection criteria so scoring is unbiased.

## Implementation

It is often a good idea to assemble a pilot group to participate in the initial implementation, again including entities of various sizes for this group. Pilot programs are an excellent way to discover unforeseen problems and remedy them before rolling out the program to a larger audience.

During this implementation phase, encourage communication among the stakeholders to get a reading of components working well and those in need of improvement. These are ready-made networks for exchanging ideas and information and are invaluable during the process. When the pilot has proved successful, a more robust rollout can be initiated.

## Planning Organization and Facilitator

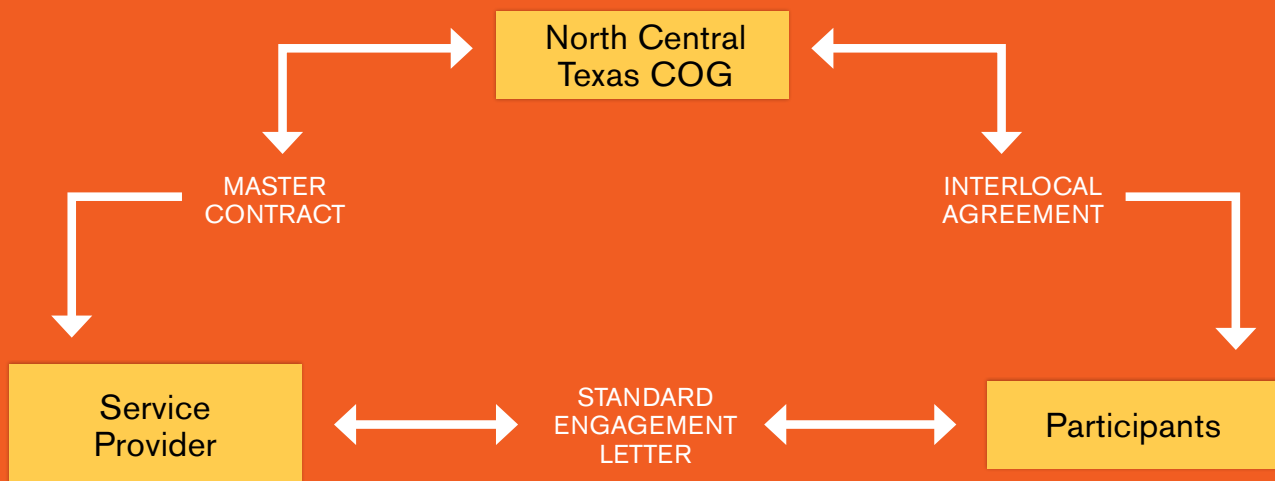
The streamlining of administrative activities is one of the biggest opportunities for shared services projects. Here are ways to streamline access to the project:

- The planning organization executes a master agreement with the selected service provider, and it is structured to allow the participating organizations to gain access through interlocal agreements.
- The participants execute an interlocal agreement with the planning organization.
- The participants can then engage the service provider through a service agreement to perform the required services.

The facilitator normally assumes responsibility for many of the administrative duties that would ordinarily be done by an individual organization or a service provider.



This graphic shows the structure of a shared services/public-private partnerships program.



### Participating Organizations

Participating entities can benefit significantly from shared services. Because individual purchasers are consolidated into an organized, volume-purchase arrangement, the participants are able to realize lower prices while still benefiting from a high-quality provider. This approach also eliminates the need for each entity to go through an individual selection process and to incur the costs involved in issuing and evaluating proposals. This is especially true for small to medium-size organizations.

NCTCOG has been able to leverage the collective bargaining power of several groups to negotiate a lower price for the contract. With the importance of cost reduction during these difficult economic times, it's notable that NCTCOG's shared services programs have been able to generate savings of 25 to 50 percent for participants.

### Service Provider

The service provider benefits by being able to reach many organizational clients with just one proposal, thus increasing its market penetration and enhancing its ability to sell other services in the future. The provider also benefits from the standardization of operations realized in the shared services arrangement, which

reduces risk for the service provider and allows better pricing to be experienced by the participants.

The clients also can forgo the expense of conducting individual contract negotiations. All of these factors give a service provider ample motivation to reply to an RFP and to partner with the planning organization.

### Examples of NCTCOG Shared Services

**iCommunities: A Success Story.** The iCommunities program created an extensive Internet mapping service that was combined with a set of powerful GIS, database, and Internet technologies. These tools allow local governments to distribute key information to their constituents and other communities within the region.

Residents are able to access specific neighborhood information such as zoning, building and activity statistics, and event notices. Information can be distributed to organizational staff on various program, asset, and work management activities. Traditionally, establishing a tool such as iCommunities would mean that each entity would incur hefty costs for hardware, personnel, and networking. Through this shared services program initiated by

NCTCOG, cities can have ready access to this powerful tool for a low cost.

Participants pay a fee to support one network and a group of technicians who service the entire participant list. As individual participants request additional functionality from the iCommunities program, the enhancements become available to all participants. A base-level functionality is automatically applied to all participants.

Additional functionality is offered on a fee basis; specific features can be set up to accommodate unique needs of a specific organization and costs charged according to complexity and extra support needs. The sharing of knowledge and innovation is one of the most positive by-products of this collaboration.

**The Small City Accounting Project: Lessons Learned.** Even with the best of intentions, not all PPPs are successful. With each new collaborative effort, however, lessons are learned. NCTCOG's Small City Accounting Project is one such example. Riding on the success of a shared services initiative to acquire enterprise resource planning software to handle accounting, purchasing, and human resources functions for three large-member groups, participants



PARTICIPATING ENTITIES CAN BENEFIT SIGNIFICANTLY FROM SHARED SERVICES. BECAUSE INDIVIDUAL PURCHASERS ARE CONSOLIDATED INTO AN ORGANIZED, VOLUME-PURCHASE ARRANGEMENT, THE PARTICIPANTS ARE ABLE TO REALIZE LOWER PRICES WHILE STILL BENEFITING FROM A HIGH-QUALITY PROVIDER.

decided that smaller entities could benefit from a similar project.

The project, unfortunately, never really progressed. The reason for this lack of advancement is that, although the larger entities were already interested in the concept and approached NCTCOG to facilitate the purchasing process, the smaller entities were contacted to determine their interest after all the parameters had been developed.

In this case, the project would have found more success had it been customer driven. The best shared services occur when the planning organization is either approached by the entity or seeks ideas from it directly.

#### **Compensation Management Services.**

**Looking to the Future:** A current NCTCOG initiative is under way to assist with compensation analysis, design, and best practices implementation. Salary costs usually make up, on average, 70 percent of a local government's general fund budget. Yet tools that readily provide the ability to quickly and accurately analyze, monitor, and control these costs are lacking, as is the ability to assess the impact that changes to salary structures have on benefits and other components of compensation packages.

Various city managers in NCTCOG's 16-county region requested assistance

in identifying potential solutions for evaluating these costs in real time. Through the procurement process, a vendor with a multifaceted web-based solution has been identified. The vendor's web tools have the capability to provide projections of personnel costs using scenario-based analytics, and they also contain current salary data so that any participating organization is able to determine the competitiveness of its compensation and benefit plan.

Other features make it easy to measure internal compensation equity. A major benefit of this program is that it increases the ability of an organization's human resources staff to carry out many functions that are currently done by consultants. This project was approved by the NCTCOG executive board in January 2011, and we are now in the implementation stage.

#### **Strategy for Success**

Consider this course of action for shared services success:

- 1. First and foremost, underpromise and overdeliver!** It is important to establish achievable results. If you set unattainable milestones or goals, you can undermine your credibility.
- 2. Begin the procurement process with the end goal in mind.** Look

toward the future throughout the RFP research, development, and scoring process. With forethought, you can avoid many of the traps and delays that can evolve during the process. Look for opportunities to standardize because standardization is usually one of the largest contributors to reducing risk and achieving cost savings.

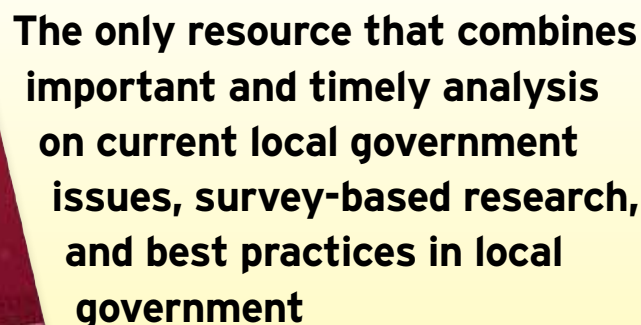
**3. Use a grassroots approach based on a crawl-walk-run philosophy.** It is best to start with a small pilot group and perfect the program before rolling out to a larger audience. Project champions are crucial in building a strong foundation for shared services projects as they have a real interest and commitment to performing the due diligence necessary to support the program and to assuring its success.

For more information on the NCTCOG shared services programs, visit the website at [www.nctcog.org/sharedservices.asp](http://www.nctcog.org/sharedservices.asp). I think our recipe can be used successfully by other local governments that want to navigate the shared services options available today. **PM**



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# TIPS *for* **TIFs**



How to get a quicker return  
on your tax increment financing dollar.

**By Alan Rosen**





**A**ccording to a 2009 economic development survey by ICMA and the National League of Cities, tax increment financing (TIF) districts are among the most popular tools in the economic development arsenal, with almost 55 percent of reporting jurisdictions indicating that they use this tool. This is up from 50 percent in a 1999 study.

A recent study by county staff evaluating TIF use in Fulton County, Georgia, made it clear that not all TIF districts in the county were created equal. This assessment led to the

following seven suggestions that may increase the likelihood of a quick return on TIF investments.

### **TIF Basics**

ICMA's 2004 Green Book, *Management Policies in Local Government Finance*, includes language that helps describe a TIF: TIF is a geographic area designated by a government entity whose current taxable value is established, "and any revenue generated from an increase in property values (the 'increment') is devoted to paying for specific improvements" within the district. The revenues generated from the established (or base) value are still collected by the government for general operating expenditures, capital expenditures, or both.

Laws governing the use of TIF districts vary widely from state to state although these districts are usually designed to spark redevelopment in an area that otherwise would not have improved on its own without intervention.

Setting up TIF districts and financing is a common way to spur development, but the method is not without its critics. One of the largest criticisms is that, by design, the rest of a jurisdiction is subsidizing the increased cost related

### **TAKEAWAYS**

#### **Here are guidelines for a quick return on investment using tax increment financing:**

- › Using commercial development may have less impact on operating costs.
- › Using other economic development tools may be better suited for areas with little taxable value.
- › Lowering millage rates over time may hinder the ability to pay off TIF bonds; increasing rates may have the opposite effect.
- › Including too much taxable value in TIF districts may overburden the general fund.
- › Using pay-as-you-go financing may be better for smaller projects.
- › Paying off TIF bonds early, if possible, may be the best option.
- › Lobbying your state for use of a portion of TIF to offset the increased costs associated with development.

to the development. This is due to the increased need for such services as fire, police, and parks as businesses and residents move in, even while the increment is diverted to fund only the redevelopment within the TIF.

## Investment Return

Most studies on TIF focus on whether the goals of the redevelopment were met. Fulton County also wanted to determine whether the TIF districts within its boundaries would provide a quick return on investment (ROI) after the districts were dissolved.

An analysis of two of the longest-running districts in the county (Westside and Atlantic Station) led to an interesting conclusion:

- Westside District (1998–2038)
  - Projected percentage of increase in taxable value: 4,889 percent.
  - Projected number of years until return on investment realized after dissolution: two years.

tic Station grew in value by much larger proportions. After the variables were analyzed, however, the explanation was obvious, as were other observations that seemed helpful in determining future decisions regarding TIF districts.

## Seven TIF Observations

During our Fulton County study, we made seven observations that might be helpful to local government managers who are making decisions about TIF districts:

### 1 Consider the Goals of the TIF

If the redevelopment plan calls for a large increase in housing units, this may translate into higher costs for your government (for example, parks, police, fire, and libraries). As these costs rise, the associated revenue from ad valorem taxes available for operating expenditures stagnates until the end of the TIF (usually 25–35 years). Commercial development typically does not increase demand for services at the same rate.

The percentage of sales and other taxes distributed to jurisdictions varies widely because it is based on state law and local agreements. Regardless of whether your jurisdiction receives a fraction of 1 percent or 100 percent, this should be taken into consideration when reviewing a TIF proposal.

### 2 Be Mindful of the “Base Value” When Creating a TIF

Creating a TIF essentially freezes the taxable value of an area that can be used for general fund revenue during the life of the district. If the base value of a district is small (as it was with Atlantic Station), the revenue available to cover the fiscal impacts resulting from new development is minimal. This increases the burden on the general fund for the life of the district.

Instead, focus on creating TIF districts where enough base value exists to generate a respectable amount of revenue (as was the case with Westside) to help buffer the effects of development on the general fund.

### 3 Remember the Effect of the Millage Rate on TIF Districts

If jurisdictions participating in a TIF decide to lower millage rates over the life of the district, this could hinder the ability to pay off debt related to the development. Keep in mind that some states require jurisdictions to pledge other general fund revenue to cover interest and principal if the increment is not enough. It was reported recently that 50 percent of one Midwestern community’s deficit was composed of transfers from the general fund to pay debt related to its TIF districts.

Conversely, if millage rates rise over time, this may aid in the ability of the participating jurisdictions to retire debt early and fully reap the benefits of the redevelopment before anticipated. Many states include laws that allow participating jurisdictions to dissolve a TIF district

**FOCUS ON CREATING TIF DISTRICTS** where enough base value exists to generate a respectable amount of revenue to help buffer the effects of development on the general fund.

- Atlantic Station District (1999–2024)
  - Projected percentage of increase in taxable value: 14,546 percent.
  - Projected number of years until return on investment realized after dissolution: 15 years.

We were surprised that Atlantic Station with its 14,546 percent increase was projected to return our investment 15 years after dissolution compared with Westside’s two years, even though Atlan-

Another short-term advantage of commercial development versus residential is that sales and other taxes may have a positive impact on your jurisdiction’s accounts even before TIF ends. Although the increment of ad valorem revenue is designated to development within the TIF district, any positive effect of development on other taxes like sales and hotel taxes (in general) is still available as those taxes can be used as originally intended within the jurisdiction.

before the scheduled date (if everyone is in agreement and all debts have been paid). This will hasten the ROI.

#### **4 Remember that More Is Not Necessarily Better**

Some communities have been criticized for overusing TIF as a redevelopment tool. Creating these districts as a panacea to cure the economic development blues is alluring, but the mixture of quick development and a stagnant revenue source can be detrimental to your financial health.

Georgia is one state that limits the amount of property that any jurisdiction can have within a TIF at one time. Atlanta, for example, has already reached this limit (10 percent of the total taxable value of the city). Developing a local ordinance similar to this may help deter overuse of this strategy.

#### **5 Consider Using the Pay-As-You-Go Financing Option**

Some jurisdictions have started combining pay-as-you-go financing with traditional bond financing when the circumstances permit. This has its advantages and disadvantages.

The primary advantage to using pay-as-you-go is that no debt is issued, so the cost of funds is lower. In addition, if this strategy enables your jurisdiction to borrow less, it may reduce the financing period. This may reduce the lifespan of a TIF and thereby provide a quicker ROI. The primary disadvantage of pay-as-you-go financing is that there may not be sufficient funds to finance ambitious projects at the beginning.

#### **6 End Early If Possible**

Local governments are looking at ways to save money. Refinancing bonds or retiring debt early has been a major part of that strategy. The same should be true for TIF. If possible, try to refinance TIF debt while interest rates are still low.

If it is within the means of all

participating jurisdictions, it is also in the best interest of all to try to retire the debt early and dissolve the TIF. Again, this will also hasten ROI as well as bring a significant increase in recurring revenues earlier than anticipated.

#### **7 Lobby for Change**

As mentioned earlier in this article, the largest criticism of TIF districts is that potential general fund revenue is being diverted to pay for development in only one area of your jurisdiction. This argument is not without its merits, but it could be quelled if states were successfully lobbied to change laws governing TIF districts.

Local government associations could push for legislation amending state laws to allow a certain portion of TIF money to be returned to participating jurisdictions to help cover the cost of increased

services such as police and fire protection caused by an influx of businesses and residents.

#### **Think Analytically**

Following the suggestions above will not guarantee that your TIF will succeed, but keeping them in mind can help ensure a faster return on your investment. The information might help you think more analytically about creating TIF districts. It might even spark more ideas about the best way for your jurisdiction to proceed, even if that means making use of another form of economic development. **PM**



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# WHAT WILL HELP NEXT GENERATION LEADERS ADVANCE?

Daly City's internal management talent exchange program *is the future*





By Patricia Martel, Shawna Maltbie, and Joanne Bond

**D**uring the next three to five years, Daly City, California, will experience significant changes in its workforce that will result in high turnover in critical leadership positions. Known stats look like this: 35 percent of non-public safety employees will be 55 or older and eligible to retire; 27 percent of public safety employees will be age 50 or over; and 9.5 percent of public safety employees will be age 55 or over and eligible to retire.

Looking at these numbers, city staff members are aware of the immediate need to develop and prepare employees for future opportunities with higher-level and broader responsibilities. There is also a desire to ensure leadership continuity and to involve executive management in planning for the future.

Because the community is committed to ensuring the long-term sustainability of Daly City's service delivery, a strong leadership base, and long-term employee development, a three-phase succession plan was implemented in July 2006. The third phase of this plan is the internal management talent exchange program (I-MTEP), which began in June 2010. The main objectives of I-MTEP are to cross train, develop leadership competencies, build collaborative and interdepartmental relationships, and encourage sharing of talented employees across departments.

### **Program Purpose and Expectations**

The city manager worked with human resources to implement an exchange program modeled after the management talent exchange program (MTEP), which was developed as an activity of the Preparing the Next Generation Program and used in San Mateo County, California. The primary difference is that MTEP is a city-to-city exchange, while the I-MTEP involves Daly City employees exclusively.

Participating employees were given an opportunity to develop new skills by working on a project while serving in a staff capacity in another department for a three-month period. Projects are submitted by department heads to the city manager and the director of human resources (HR) for consideration and selection.

Expectations for the I-MTEP participants include:

- Developing leadership competencies.
- Applying cross-training and transfer skills.
- Building collaborative, interdepartmental relationships within the city.
- Completing a department specific assignment.
- Presenting assignment outcomes at regular department head and city council meetings.

### **Application and Selection Process**

Employees interested in applying for the I-MTEP are required to attend an informational session hosted by the city manager and the HR director. They also submit an application with responses to these questions:

1. Why are you interested in this program?  
(Please list one short-term and one long-term career goal and your plan to accomplish them.)
2. What is your greatest strength?
3. Which of your professional accomplishments are you most proud of?
4. What kind of transferable skills can you bring to the Daly City Management Talent



## Daly City's internal management talent exchange program gives selected employees an opportunity to develop new skills by working on a project in another department for three-months.

### Exchange Program?

5. If placed in a management talent exchange assignment, what skills would you want to develop?
6. How would you describe your ideal three-month assignment?

Applicants are interviewed by the city manager and the HR director. Candidates who most closely meet the competencies associated with the targeted positions and projects are selected to participate in the program.

### Program Process and Curriculum

Prior to the start of the program, department heads meet as a group with an external leadership coach to strategize and plan for the program's success. At the kick-off meeting held one week before the program starts, department heads, participants, and the leadership coach meet to begin relationship building, exchange program expectations, and discuss assignments.

Participants create a development plan with input from the leadership coach and department heads that focuses on his or her specific growth areas, which may include leadership vision and style, public speaking, project management, emotional intelligence, interpersonal relationships, analytic and problem solving skills, stress tolerance, and other relevant needs.

The department heads are responsible for coaching and mentoring employees assigned to their department. They provide guidance with project assignments and also engage in meaningful, interactive experiences by taking participants to meetings with internal and external stakeholders, as well as on operational ride-alongs. The intent is to expose participants to roles and

responsibilities of higher-level leadership and management.

Department heads and the leadership coach also check in with participants on program issues on a monthly basis. The intent of the check-in is to:

- Support specific leadership development needs.
- Reinforce coaching and mentoring responsibilities.
- Build relationships.
- Provide group coaching and teaching on common themes.
- Exchange ideas and share information.
- Manage assignment progress.

Individual leadership coaching is provided to the participants as well as the department heads throughout the program. The city manager holds individual meetings with each of the participants to discuss program progress and their goals and vision for their future with the city.

### Program Completion

In the final week, participants present a 10-minute, five-slide overview of their project assignments and leadership development to the department heads as well as to city councilmembers.

At the end of the program, the manager, department heads, participants, leadership coach, and other interested parties celebrate (over lunch) successful program completion and individual and group accomplishments. They also conduct a program evaluation.

### Program Outcomes

Based on feedback from the stakeholders, the program is a huge success. It accomplishes much more than what it was set out to do. The impact on employees

and departments has been significant. Participants return to their departments with new ideas, new enthusiasm, and new competencies.

I-MTEP offers a wealth of personal and professional development opportunities. It also provides an excellent vehicle for collaboration and problem solving for employees and department heads. Participants can step outside their comfort zone and are tasked with researching, developing, and presenting solutions to the city's current operational challenges.

Employees exit the program with a greater understanding of their individual strengths and weaknesses and with sharpened analytical, management, and interpersonal skills.

### Program Impact

The impact of I-MTEP on Daly City has been to:

- Identify and energize the next generation of leaders.
- Strengthen cross-functional learning for workforce development.
- Clarify the department head role as mentor, which may also contribute to their personal goal of legacy building.
- Increase productivity through assignments that support city-wide initiatives including performance measures.
- Actualize succession planning goals within budgetary constraints through creative program development. **PM**



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BY RAYAN COUTINHO

# KEEP IT SIMPLE

## Avoid a Complicated Social Media Policy for Your Employee Handbook

**S**ocial media such as Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace provide a community with new channels to communicate with its residents and potential residents, as well as the regional area, and all might help spread the word about events, ordinances, and meetings. Such use, however, has also created a significant number of legal problems for employers. In addition to a decrease in employee productivity is the potential for legal liability from several sources, including breach of privacy, defamation, harassment, discrimination, copyright infringement, and disclosure of confidential or privileged information.

This concern has led to the insertion of complicated and detailed social media policies into employee handbooks. Such policies create complex descriptions of what an employee can or cannot do or say while using each technology. Is there an alternative approach? I have been recommending a different concept—an approach where employees are treated as adults and are guided by basic concepts that could govern use of all technology, including phone, Internet, text messages, blogs, and social media.

Keeping it simple provides the employer with flexibility in dealing with undesirable situations. The following concepts can be tailored to your community's needs.

### 14 Concepts to Guide Employees

- 1. Remember that everything on the Internet lives indefinitely.** You have the personal and legal responsibility for your statements and actions. When in doubt, ask the designated person in the office before doing or saying something.
- 2. Do not speak on behalf of the employer unless you are authorized to**

**do so.** If you are not authorized, then you may speak only as an individual providing a personal opinion. If authorized to speak on behalf of the employer, you must keep records of all online activities.

**3. Keep confidential any employer information** that is not a public record; this is paramount.

**4. You should assume that every communication could be treated as a public record and could be revealed to a third party.** Truth of identity and information is therefore important. Get your facts straight. Let subject matter experts respond to negative posts about the community.

**5. Give credit for authorship where it is due.** Do not use copyrighted material, trademarks, or other content of third parties without the necessary permission from the rights holder. To avoid the appearance of official approval, use of employers' trademarks and logos in social media, without prior written permission, is prohibited.

**6. Be respectful of each person's legal right to express an opinion,** whether those opinions complement or contradict yours. It is okay to disagree, but please be polite.

**7. Respect other employees' right to privacy.** Don't share information about another employee's opinions, beliefs, thoughts, and emotions. Avoid posting pictures, audio, and videos without the permission of those featured in them; and do not disclose private facts or information gained through unreasonable intrusion.

**8. Avoid social media during business hours** unless it is within the scope of your work.

**9. Do not conduct business communications, internal or external, using social media.** For example, if an office

colleague is your friend on Facebook, do not use the site's e-mail account to discuss work-related matters. You must use your work e-mail account.

**10. Do not discuss another employee's, business partner's, or vendor's performance** using social media.

**11. Comply with all applicable laws in order to avoid litigation and wasting taxpayers' money.** Never discuss anything to do with a pending legal matter or case without running it by the legal office.

**12. Respect differences.** Harassment, slurs, insults—whether racial, sexual, or religious—are prohibited online just as they are prohibited in the workplace.

**13. Any statement about a business or individual must be readily verifiable** by means of a link to a reliable, neutral source with a reputation for fact checking and accuracy.

**14. You have no right or expectation of privacy in any communication** that is created, sent, or received either using employer property—including but not limited to cellphones, land lines, Internet, computers, voicemail, e-mail accounts, and fax—or that relates in any way to an employer or its official business. All such uses and communications are subject to monitoring, review, and inspection by an employer at any time without notice.

### Why Policies Are Good

No law requires an employer, private or public, to provide employees with technology-related policies. However, such policies can serve as preventive medicine as well as good employment tools, and can educate employees on your community's policies on modern communication tools and their use in the workplace. Documented technology policies should be made part of your employee handbook. **PM**



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BY JOAN MCCALLEN

# NEW LAW ALLOWS FOR ROTH PROVISIONS IN 457 PLANS

Helpful to local and state government employees

**T**he Small Business Jobs Act of 2010, which was signed into law on September 27, 2010, opens the door for 457 plans to begin offering Roth provisions to participants. Two new provisions, Roth elective deferrals and in-plan Roth conversions, are optional

earnings) are tax free. This provision was already permitted in 401(k) and 403(b) plans and can now be made available to state and local government employees within their 457 plans.

Plans that adopt the Roth elective deferral provision can also offer in-plan

## THESE TOOLS PROVIDE ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC EMPLOYEES TO SAVE FOR RETIREMENT.

plan features that employers can elect to make available within their 457 plans starting this year. These tools provide another opportunity for public employees to save for retirement.

The Roth elective deferral provision allows participants to designate a portion (or all) of their contributions to the plan as Roth contributions. Roth contributions are made on an after-tax basis, and qualified distributions of Roth assets (in other words, contributions *and* associated

Roth conversions. This provision, which is also new to 401(k) and 403(b) plans, will help state and local government employers retain plan assets by giving eligible participants the ability to convert pre-tax assets to Roth assets through an in-plan rollover. Previously, participants seeking to perform this type of Roth conversion had to roll assets from their retirement plan to a Roth IRA.

These new Roth provisions can now be made available to all of ICMA-RC's 457 plans. If a plan sponsor chooses to amend its 457 plan to allow these new provisions, ICMA-RC will notify the plan's participants and provide them with information on how to take advantage of the provisions.

We at ICMA-RC are excited about these new provisions. They are an additional opportunity for us to expand the savings options available for public employees and assist them as they work toward building retirement security. **PM**

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**JOAN MCCALLEN**

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# ICMA

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### UPCOMING EVENTS

**May 11-13** ICMA Gettysburg  
Leadership Institute, Gettysburg, PA

**June 1-3** Transforming Local  
Government/FCCMA Conference,  
Clearwater, FL

**July 1** Credentialing  
Application Deadline

**July 15** Leadership ICMA  
Application Deadline



### IMPORTANT DEADLINES

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BY STEPHEN CRANE

# REVEALING MY CAREER PLAN

I was recently asked how, or why, I made the leap from being a special projects coordinator in a local government economic development office to being a city administrator. In truth, the career arc that landed me in an administrator-manager role actually started long before I made this most recent leap.

The first step was entering a graduate program in public administration after I graduated from college. The next step

directly, using interpersonal relationships instead of the traditional chain of command, which was one of the parts of the job that I liked the most. Because the duties included managing acquisitions and relocations as part of the urban renewal process, I also worked with the public in a direct, personal way. Although sometimes frustrating, it was also highly rewarding.

When I accepted the special projects coordinator position in a larger city, it

state—and I realized that my chances for success were better there because of the greater number of small, rural communities that perhaps would not attract large numbers of applicants. Although it took a few applications, I was finally able to achieve my goal—in the city where my wife grew up, of all places!

Here are the lessons that this process taught me:

- Sometimes you need to reevaluate the circumstances that influenced your previous decisions.
- You may need to look beyond your existing organization, municipality, or state to find the right fit.
- Making the leap to an administrator-manager position in a small community will fill any experience gaps you may have because administrators are expected to be the director of personnel, the director of economic development, the budget director, the director of public relations, the director of constituent services, the director of special events.... (I think you get the point).
- Because local governments are often looking for one candidate who can fill all these roles, take advantage of any opportunity to broaden your responsibilities in your current role. It will improve your value in your current organization and make you more valuable as a job candidate.
- Taking control of your future and making the leap now—instead of waiting for something to happen—will give you the credentials necessary for a long and fulfilling career in local government administration. **PM**

## TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR FUTURE AND MAKING THE LEAP NOW—INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR SOMETHING TO HAPPEN—WILL GIVE YOU THE CREDENTIALS NECESSARY FOR A LONG AND FULFILLING CAREER IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION.

was selecting a course of study that was properly focused. The MPA program at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., allowed students to create their own concentrations.

At the time, I was working on Capitol Hill and knew that I wanted to experience something more tangible and less theoretical. So I created a concentration called managing state and local organizations, which allowed me to combine management science with administration (instead of policy development).

When I left the District of Columbia and returned to my hometown in Massachusetts, I wanted to put my education to use, so I worked as an urban renewal project manager in the city's planning and economic development division. Because it was a newly created position, I had the opportunity to shape the manner in which I fulfilled the duties.

The position required interaction with nearly every other city department, and I made sure I conducted those interactions

presented me with the opportunity to work on economic development projects on a larger scale. Local governments don't always have the capacity to engage in the types of efforts that I was managing, so it exposed me to a higher level of challenges and opportunities. I learned that one of the drawbacks of working in a larger organization is not being able to have more input on outcomes.

After one particularly frustrating day, I went back and read some things I wrote while pursuing my MPA. Doing this reminded me that managing a local organization was my original goal. I began to explore city administrator jobs and realized quickly that, because of the competitiveness of the market in Massachusetts, I would need to apply for a position as an assistant administrator or manager. Those positions are rare and often require human resources and budget experience. I had neither.

I began looking at administrator-manager jobs in Wisconsin—my wife's home



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# 5 WAYS TO CUSTOMIZE SECURITY

**I**n today's austere fiscal climate it is important to realize that there are tangible actions that can be taken that will significantly enhance the security of our government buildings without requiring a larger security budget. It is necessary, however, to invest time and forethought rather than dollars, as each building is a unique structure requiring customized planning.

Emergencies have a tendency to occur at the least opportune time. As such, it is critical that we develop and have real security practices in place that provide guidance to tenants and our communities. Basic security principles are universal in their application to all buildings.

Here are five clear, distinct, and actionable items that managers can take immediately.

**1. Establish a security committee for every government building in your community.** The security committee needs to be composed of tenant representatives, such as department heads, as they know best the dynamics of their buildings. It is important that a security professional be part of the group to help provide guidance.

**2. Identify potential but real threats to your community buildings for both man-made and natural disasters.** Natural disasters include hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, and flooding. Man-made disasters can involve biological, fire, active shooter, and other dangers.

**3. Conduct a physical security survey.** This type of survey helps identify strengths and vulnerabilities of a building and determine which issues need to be addressed when emergency protocols are developed.

**4. Establish, create, and review emergency protocols for buildings on the basis of potential but real threats.** Emergency plans provide guidance to building tenants about what they need to do in order to keep safe.

**5. Train and practice emergency plans with tenants and emergency personnel.** Evacuations, medical emergencies, shelter in place, and other plans all require training and practice to carry them out correctly when needed. Training should be as real as possible to simulate the stress in an actual emergency. **PM**



**LIEUTENANT JIMMIE H. BARRETT, JR.**

Court Security Supervisor, Arlington County, Virginia, jbarrett@arlingtonva.us and author, *Protecting Court: A Practitioner's Guide to Court Security*, [www.protectingcourt.com](http://www.protectingcourt.com)

# TOTAL COMMITMENT

## Getting All Employees Involved Is a Matter of Survival

**H**ow do organizations survive and even thrive given the challenges posed by today's harsh economic climate? Josh Leibner and Gershon Mader, coauthors of the book, *The Power of Strategic Commitment: Achieving Extraordinary Results through TOTAL Alignment and Engagement*, believe they have an answer: ask your employees. They say that there must be alignment at the top levels; all middle managers need to be on board; and you've got to reach out and touch every employee, ask them what they think, and then listen to what they say.

The authors also say that little good can happen when strategic development is done only by the top management of an organization. "Everyone in the organization needs to be involved in strategic conversations," says Leibner.

The authors agree that it is crucial to ask employees for their feedback on more than just the short-term, tactical problems. The biggest breakthroughs to total commitment and complete alignment always come when employees have deep conversations with top management on the bigger picture and longer-term issues.

The biggest problems occur when leaders micromanage and create an environment of compliance. People simply cease acting as partners when they are attacked. They are forced to protect their own world, and a huge amount of their energy goes into how to survive and keep their bosses off their backs.

Here is Leibner and Mader's "Cheat Sheet of Strategic Thinking Dos and Don'ts":

### DO:

- Actively ask for input from all departments and levels.
- Promote and incorporate others' ideas.
- Ask your staff what they would start, stop, or continue in your position.
- Routinely balance out your meetings by discussing both strategic and tactical issues.

### DON'T:

- Make strategic development an exclusive club limited to the higher-ups.
- Stifle strategic thinking by not being open to and not acting on others' feedback.
- Try to maintain control by micromanaging.
- Focus solely on and encourage tactical thinking in meetings. **PM**

**JOSH LEIBNER** and **GERSHON MADER**, with Dr. Alan Weiss, are coauthors of *The Power of Strategic Commitment: Achieving Extraordinary Results through TOTAL Alignment and Engagement*, published by AMACOM (288 pages; ISBN-10: 0814413749; ISBN-13: 978-0814413746). For more information, visit [www.strategiccommitment.com](http://www.strategiccommitment.com).

# NEW VIEW ON MEDICAL EVALUATIONS FOR POLICE

**L**aw enforcement officers are often the most visible agents of state and local government. At the local level, the cost of providing law enforcement services is one of the most significant appropriations for any community.

The largest part of funding law enforcement also involves the expenses associated with paying for personnel and their benefits and expenses. Local governments spend a great deal of time and expense in the appropriate selection and training of law enforcement candidates. They are using standards and guidelines for testing and training that give consistency to the law enforcement profession.

This, however, has been missing in the medical evaluation of officer selection and retention. The medical evaluation of officers is usually left to local physicians who may not always understand the unique requirements of the law enforcement profession. There is a dearth of guidance to help physicians make informed medical decisions.

Officers perform a critical, dangerous job, a job that can put them, their coworkers, and the public at risk if they are unable to perform essential job tasks. Who is capable and who is not capable to do this job has been poorly defined in the past. A multitude of local and state guidelines and standards have attempted to do this, but none of them—with the exception of the California POST—was based on any scientifically substantiated data. Thus, one would see such phrases as “to a reasonable degree of certainty” or even “moral certainty” as reasons to allow or disallow someone to become or remain as a law enforcement officer.

### New Guide

Since the introduction of *Guidance for the Medical Evaluation of Law Enforcement*

*Officers*, published by the American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine (ACOEM), this situation has changed. Seven years in development, this electronic, subscription-based guidance is intended to provide physicians with information to assist them in making medical qualification recommendations that promote the health and safety of law enforcement officers at the same time it ensures they will be able to protect civilian life and property.

In addition to its target audience of physicians who provide medical care for law enforcement officers, the publication is also a valuable tool for public safety personnel and members of national and international associations representing officers, law enforcement executives, local government managers, attorneys, and insurers.

Existing medical evaluation sections cover diabetes, vision, hearing, cardiovascular disease, and medication use. Sections currently under development include pregnancy, infectious diseases (in the approval process), and seizure, bleeding, substance abuse, prostheses, and pulmonary disorders (in the development process).

A task group of the public safety medicine section of ACOEM developed the publication. The group was made up of occupational physicians with extensive public safety medicine experience in the public, private, corporate, and military sectors as well as members of local government management (ICMA), chiefs' organizations (IACP, NAWLEE), and unions.

Also, for each specific section, content experts and advocacy groups were invited to participate in the process. These partnerships have proven to be invaluable, and this collaboration has produced a state-of-the-art product. The method of developing the document ensured that

it would have broad support within the medical and policing communities.

The document is evidence based. This means that the members of the ACOEM task group responsible for developing the document researched the medical literature to find whether there was a scientific basis for any restrictions that might be recommended. The two main criteria that might require restrictions were (1) a risk of sudden incapacitation and (2) inability to physically perform certain job tasks.

When there was good science to support the conclusions, the source of this information was clearly included in the document. When there was not sufficient evidence, the group would so note that fact and not make any recommendations, or the group might present a consensus opinion and note what specific information served as the basis for this consensus.

### Web-based Information

Because this is a Web-based document, ACOEM will be able to easily add to and update the document without the long lag times that plague print documents. Whenever a change or addition is made to the document, all subscribers will be immediately notified by e-mail. This format also allows the task group to react quickly to comments, criticisms, and suggestions—which are strongly encouraged—from the users of the document.

The site can be accessed at <http://www.acoem.org/leoguidelines.aspx>. Here you can subscribe to the document and also preview the “Preamble” and “Essential Job Tasks” sections of the document. Any comments that you may have also can be sent to the task group through the “Contact Us” link. **PM**



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Memorial Physicians Group, Chicago, Illinois



# EPA'S GREEN POWER PARTNERSHIP

## Helping communities fight climate change

**F**or most local governments, electricity usage is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions. By using green power, a local government can dramatically reduce its carbon footprint, increase citizen pride, improve public health, and enhance its community image. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Green Power Partnership can help in determining whether a green power purchase is right for a community.

### Partnering with EPA

The Green Power Partnership (the Partnership) is a national voluntary program designed to drive the U.S. renewable energy supply by increasing demand for green power among leading U.S. organizations. Green power is electricity that is generated from such eligible renewable energy sources as solar, wind, biomass, and low-impact hydropower.

Localities can benefit from partnering with EPA by being able to take advantage of the credibility, technical assistance, recognition, and up-to-date market information that EPA provides. Today, nearly 1,300 organizations are Green Power Partners, including more than 100 local governments. These local government partners are collectively using 2.1 billion kilowatt-hours (kWh) of green power—more than 10 percent of the Partnership's total.

By using EPA's resources, partners have found they may be able to save time, effort, and cost in buying green power; better estimate the environmental benefits of switching to green power; and better promote their green power commitment to media and stakeholders.

The Partnership promotes the actions of its partners through a variety of recognition opportunities, including the program's national- and sector-focused top partner rankings. The list of the top 20 local governments recognizes the



GPC MAP

*EPA's Green Power Communities are collectively buying more than 900 million kWh of green power annually, equivalent to the carbon dioxide emissions (CO<sub>2</sub>) from electricity use of nearly 80,000 average American homes.*

20 largest municipal green power users in the Partnership and attracts national media attention. This list includes Houston, Texas; Washington, D.C.; Chicago, Illinois; San Diego, California; and Montgomery County, Pennsylvania.

### EPA Green Power Communities

A growing number of localities nationwide are choosing to promote community-based support for green power by becoming an EPA Green Power Community (GPC). GPCs are towns, villages, cities, counties, or Native American tribes in which the local government, businesses, and residents collectively buy green power in amounts that meet or exceed EPA's GPC purchase requirements.

To date, more than 30 cities and towns in Alaska, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Maryland, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin have earned the GPC designation. As part of EPA's recognition, GPCs receive two colorful street signs reading: "Welcome to a Green Power Community. We exceed EPA guidelines for buying clean, renewable energy."

### Corvallis, Oregon – EPA Green Power Community

In 2005, Corvallis, Oregon, became the

first city on the West Coast to become an EPA Green Power Community, purchasing more than 17 million kWh of green power. Corvallis's green power use has reached more than 100 million kWh annually—nearly 15 percent of the community's total electricity consumption.

Almost 85 percent of the community purchases green power through the local utility. Residents, businesses, and other organizations in Corvallis are meeting GPC requirements by purchasing green power from a mix of biogas, biomass, wind, and solar, in the form of both renewable energy certificates and utility-supplied green power products.

Corvallis's communitywide participation is the result of strong collaborative efforts among the city government, residents, businesses, and educational institutions. This earned it EPA's Green Power Community Challenge, a year-long campaign to encourage local governments to use renewable energy and fight climate change.

EPA invites communities across the country to take part. Visit [www.epa.gov/greenpower](http://www.epa.gov/greenpower) for information. **PM**

For more information, contact Allison Dennis, Green Power Partnership; e-mail, [dennis.allison@epa.gov](mailto:dennis.allison@epa.gov), and website, [www.epa.gov/greenpower](http://www.epa.gov/greenpower).



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BY MICHAEL WILLIS, ICMA-CM

## OFF TO A GOOD START?

It's best to have access to your coat and keys



**T**here was an excellent article published in the December 2010 issue of *PM* magazine by Katie Lichtig on how to make a great start to your new manager job. Pity I hadn't read it before one particular day during my first weeks at my new position in New South Wales, Australia!

The day itself did get off to a good start. I went to the signing of the Illawarra Aboriginal Regional Partnership Agreement in Dapto, a nearby town. It was obvious that this signing was the culmination of a protracted process and meant a huge amount to the local indigenous people. It was quite special to be there.

As the signing event finished earlier than anticipated, I went back to work before my next out-of-office engagement. As I readied to leave my office for this appointment, I went to the filing room—what many readers might call a coat closet—to collect my coat containing my wallet and car keys. The door refused to open. No amount of gentle and not-so-gentle coaxing would make a difference.

Looking at my watch, I could feel the first beads of perspiration begin to form on my forehead. The administrator<sup>1</sup> and I were supposed to be going to lunch with the managing director of the local daily paper. Turning up late—or not at all—would not look good.

Silently chanting, “I am calm, I am calm,” I stumbled out into the executive

office and asked, “Don’t suppose any of you have a master key to the filing room? Someone’s locked me out.” (This was a bit rich really, seeing as how I was the last one in that room.) There were blank looks followed by a rustling of keys in various places, accompanied by plaintive repetitions of “I don’t think we’ve got a master key.”

### Hilarity Ensues

I now felt a nervous tick beginning to form. My mounting and now obvious sense of panic rapidly spread to the rest of the executive office staff who to their credit took this seriously and began to try every key they could lay their hands on, but to no avail.

All, that is, save for one person. As I looked more closely at her, I noticed that she was beginning to resemble a volcano about to erupt. My searching stare had its effect. She burst into hysterical laughter, and in a flash the others joined in. I could feel my leadership and authority ebbing with each peal of laughter. And I had been doing so well in my first four weeks on the job!

Then our fearless administrator turned up, riding in like the Lone Ranger to rescue his faithful companion. On hearing of the problem, he immediately assumed full command of the situation and bellowed out, “Get me a piece of plastic!”

We proceeded to watch as he wrestled with the said piece of plastic, endeavour-

ing to pry open the latch separating me from my coat, keys, and money, to say nothing of the remaining shreds of my managerial dignity. He had to admit failure, however, and thrust away the now dismembered piece of plastic.

Finally, the cavalry did arrive in the shape of two real, practical men from works depot who quickly took control of the situation. They rapidly went through a number of scenarios ranging from, “Hand me my drill,” to “I think we should go in through the roof,” and “Let’s break down the door!”

At this point, the administrator and I beat a tactful retreat to the outer office to deal with such important matters of state as how we were going to explain to the paper’s managing director why we hadn’t turned up for lunch, along with the appropriate wording of my resignation letter given my inability to control such a situation.

### All Is Calm

Then suddenly, as in the best John Wayne westerns, a great cry erupted from my office. Success was at hand! Actually, it was far more mundane than that. One of the men from the depot unscrewed and removed the ventilation louvre at the bottom of the door, and his mate, who must have the longest arms in the council, reached up and opened the door.

On my return from lunch, an air of normalcy had returned to the executive office, but behind my back I could hear the strangled mirth that was taking place. Taking me to one side, a staff member gently whispered into my ear, “Don’t worry; I’ve put tape over the lock so it won’t happen again.” **PM**

<sup>1</sup> Due to their dysfunctional governance, the Shellharbour City councillors were fired by the state government in July 2008 for four years. They were replaced by an administrator who, mercifully, is a retired city manager.



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