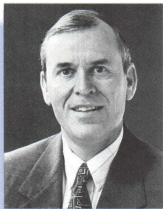


In-Service Training Award in Memory of Clarence E. Ridley

ICMA's In-Service Training Award is presented to the administrator or administrators who have developed and implemented highly effective in-service training programs for local government employees. This award was established in memory of Clarence E. Ridley, a pioneer in the field of local government management. This year, ICMA presents the award to William M. Christopher, city manager of Westminster, Colorado.



William M. Christopher

City Manager Bill Christopher laid the foundation for continuous improvement in the city of Westminster, Colorado (pop. 94,500) by instilling the belief that good government starts with good employees. In support of that belief, his management philosophy embodies the following elements: an atmosphere of sincere, people-oriented management; a quality work envi-

ronment; opportunities for career development and advancement; and job enrichment.

In 1996, the city of Westminster initiated its Employee Development and Training Program to support these values and to provide city employees with an array of training options. The program was developed following an internal opinion survey that indicated change was needed.

Westminster's employees stayed involved throughout the process of planning and implementing the training program. The city organization solicited employee input during supervisor summits, at employee advisory committee meetings, and through a survey on training needs. This feedback allowed the city organization to design a program that meets the needs, goals, and interests of employees. Additionally, the employee development staff researched how other cities, professional associations, and private-sector organizations supported their training efforts.

The resulting Employee Development and Training Program is a unique curriculum that is intended to be a five-year plan for employee and organizational growth.

The flexible, comprehensive curriculum offers more than 60 in-house training courses, as well as a list of other programs throughout the nation. The core curriculum focuses on the professional development needs of all four levels of employees within the organization (i.e., executive/mid-managers, front-line supervisors, professional support staff, and front-line employees), and segments course offerings into those that are required, strongly encouraged, and optional.

Full-time employees are required to complete a minimum of 40 hours of training annually, but the flexible plan allows an individual to select training programs based on his or her specific career goals and annual objectives. Examples include classes on negotiation skills, ethics, coaching employees, and team leadership skills. Some classes are customized to support the core philosophies of the city. To support the city's mission to achieve excellence in customer service, for example, the city offers classes such as citizen relations, dealing with difficult people, telephone skills, and value-added service. Other courses help employees understand Westminster's government and the services it offers. Each class is closely monitored and evaluated.

Westminster's Employee Development and Training Program provides an opportunity for the city to strengthen the customer-service, communication, and leadership skills of city employees. The program exemplifies Westminster's ongoing commitment to excellence by offering participants the skills they need not only to do their jobs better but to take the next step up the career ladder.

Westminster employees orient new employees concerning the city's history and goals during "Westminster 101" class.

