

Veterans Guide to Finding a Job *in Local Government*



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A Note to Veterans

You've been in the military for 6, 12, or even 20 years, but now a transition to civilian employment is upon you. The job you performed in the military will always be important and helped mold you into the stellar soldier and future asset to any local government organization. The challenges you face during your transition period to civilian employment are something you can overcome by keeping the following in mind.

First, be aware of tunnel vision. The more important the goal, the more likely you are to focus too much on it. Don't allow your military job, or your rank, to define your civilian career path. Trying jobs that are identical to your military career is never bad, but don't eliminate those that are different. Make a list of 10 to 12 local government careers you think you might enjoy and draw additional skills sets from those. Local government employers are always looking for great leadership; teach yourself how to fit the bill and stay motivated.

Second, approach your transition with an open mind. Many former military members leave active duty with very high expectations only to find their dream job wasn't waiting for them on the other end. Don't feel defeated and never ever give up; you weren't trained to quit! Start charting your course! Some local government positions may require you to start one level below what you're capable of doing. Don't take offense to working your way up to a job more commensurate with your age and experience level. This provides an opportunity to build on your experiences just as you did in the military. Take the risk, while it may hurt financially at first, setting your goal and achieving it will be worth it in the end. When you initially interview with a local government agency, inform them of your willingness to accept a lower starting salary with the intention of working hard, proving yourself, and your desire to be promoted after obtaining the skills and training necessary.

Third, it will be uncomfortable, and at times very overwhelming. We're all aware the transition itself isn't that difficult; lots of paperwork, medical appointments, clearances, etc. The overwhelming part is all of the transitioning happening at once. This is why preparation is a priority. Start early, complete your education, and continue learning throughout your military career. The transition process begins months—even years—before you are ready to separate. Always invest in your future self; attend a trade school, take the extra leadership course in the military, ask your command staff to support your training requests.

Fourth, tell your individual military story because it's one of the most important things about you. Don't be afraid; pay attention to what your audience (prospective employer) wants and provide pointed details that make you shine. The opportunity to relate your military career to the position you're applying for will present itself, and when it does, don't shy away. Provide prospective employers with those important job-related connections, capitalize on your strengths, as they relate to the position your applying for, and never omit the leadership qualities that have been so valuable to you throughout your extensive career. Your military experiences are individual to you. Be able to effectively communicate and prove to the prospective employer that your skills are top-notch.

In closing, you can successfully maneuver the transition from military life to a career in local government. Remember to be aware of tunnel vision and try not to focus on only one career path; branch out, and take some risks. Always approach your transition with an open mind and be prepared to take one step back to eventually move two steps forward. Prepare to be overwhelmed; but know it will pass. Education and job-related training is the best investment you can make in yourself. Lastly, tell your story, make it relatable, and provide those valuable connections. Take this information and go forth, like the Army slogan says, "Be all you can be."

What Is Your Level of Experience as a Veteran?

EARLY-CAREER VETERANS

Your military skill sets are most common with 1 to 10 years of service. You've been given immense responsibility in austere and politically sensitive environments at a young age. You've managed budgets and cross-functional teams that are larger than an entire local government staff. You are great under pressure and rarely intimidated by complex problems or issues. You are the perfect fit for a local government job.

MID-CAREER VETERANS

Your military skill sets are most common with 10 to 16 years of service. As a mid-career veteran, you know what it's like to run cross-functional teams, like those in local government organizations: human resources, fleet and facilities maintenance, budget and procurement, logistics, operations management, information technology, and civil affairs.

Your experience and maturity make you an incredible asset for conflict management with a demonstrated ability to solve complex local government problems. You will succeed in any local government role offered to you.

SENIOR VETERANS

As a senior veteran, you may have a myriad of city- and county- manager-level leadership experience in strategic planning, operations, budgeting, logistics, transportation, and city/base operations. You have excelled in leading a diverse team of talented people that involved significant interaction on a daily basis with the local city and county governments, school boards and chambers of commerce, as well as businesses and the general public. Further, you worked with the state and federal levels of government during state and national emergencies.

Let's get started.

Why Should You Consider a Career in Local Government?

While many who are transitioning out of the military naturally gravitate to careers in law enforcement or choose to return to school to learn a new profession, there are actually many options within local government that might be appealing to veterans. For some, having a lower-stress job, or one where you're not on-call all of the time, is one of the greatest pulls toward some government jobs. According to Chris Taylor, assistant director of transportation in Abilene, Texas, he was looking for "a little or no stress career" when he was transitioning out of a nearly 27-year career in the U.S. Marine Corps. Initially, he says he wanted "a career where I would look at my watch at 5:00 p.m. and could go home for the day. A career that would enable me to have weekends with my friends and family." Ultimately, Chris says he "didn't go into that career. Instead I went into airports," but there are lots of other options for folks who are looking for a slower-paced, less stressful environment within local government, especially within many entry-level positions.

Fortunately, the diverse training that most in the armed services receive can help them have the needed skills for a variety of jobs. As Perry Tucker, a 24-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force and a member of Abilene's traffic signals department, relates, "It was easy for me because I had been tasked in so many different positions (i.e., aircraft maintenance, safety, logistics, management, etc.) throughout my military career that I could apply for many different jobs." While it can be hard to "translate" those military skills over to civilian jobs, the wealth of experience and training military folks receive opens them up to lots of job options.

TROUBLE WITH “TRANSLATING” SKILLS

While you know things will change once you leave the military, being able to successfully navigate that transition by getting the credit you deserve for all of the work you’ve done can be particularly challenging. Because the military uses such specialized vocabulary (and lots of acronyms) for many of its jobs and skills, it can be difficult to know the equivalents in “civilian-speak.” According to John Hardy, a 21-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force and a code compliance officer in the stormwater division of Abilene,

“I found it extremely difficult to articulate the levels of responsibility I had during my service to individuals with limited or no knowledge of military structure. I also had some trouble explaining the correlation between the jobs I had in the military and the position I was trying to get.”

To make the translation easier, be sure to take advantage of the transition services on your installation, and check out our skills matrix on page 13.

LAUNCHING THE CIVILIAN JOB SEARCH

As you get ready to leave your post for the last time, there are several things you can do to help make your civilian-life job search successful. Be sure to take full advantage of the transition resources your installation offers, but also do some of the things civilians do every day when looking for a new job. Search the Internet, network with your friends “on the outside,” take advantage of local workforce centers, and attend local job fairs. Just be aware that you’re starting over in many ways, and don’t be frustrated with how new and strange that may feel. John Hardy of Abilene shares,

“I really didn’t know what to expect with any job outside the military; it was scary and exciting at the same time. I would compare it to my first job search as a young adult.”

Many veterans want to continue a career in service in some way, and that’s often why work in local government can seem so attractive. Be sure to check out your local government’s webpages and job postings to see if a career in a highly structured, service-oriented local organization might make you feel right at home.

SLOWN DOWN, SOLDIER

You know on some level that your working life is going to be very different once you get out of the service, but what exactly that’s going to look like is hard to tell. One thing that has frustrated more than one veteran is the much different pace within local government. According to Perry Tucker of Abilene, things in local government “move very slowly, unlike the military, where things happen as you speak.” While the

differences in speed of execution can be jarring at first, local governments often have many more hoops and hurdles to jump through and over when implementing new projects and initiatives.

To help provide a context for that seemingly glacial pace of government change in the public sector, you can get educated on your local government and its structure. Learning more about how your government works and the different roles the council or board, mayor, city or county manager, and others have can help you understand their decision-making and reporting structures and the timelines they often operate within.

THERE'S NO CRYING IN BASEBALL (OR IN THE MILITARY)

One of the toughest things for many veterans to navigate when entering the civilian workforce is the “really thin skin” civilians have, according to Adam Esquivel of Abilene’s streets division and a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps. Many veterans have noted that others view them as particularly abrupt, callous, and sharp when they are new to the workforce because the tone and expectations within the military are much different.

In order to adjust your tone and vocabulary and to develop your more sympathetic side, spend a little time each day as you transition out of the military talking with and listening to other people. While you need to speak to other adults as adults, slowing down your pace, warming up your tone, and finding kinder, gentler words will help others receive your messages more easily.

A JOB IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT IS NOT ABOUT THE MONEY ... RIGHT NOW

Like the military, most local governments do not offer the best pay, but try to make up for it with a good benefits package. For those transitioning out of the military after a few years of service, having access to these benefits can be a real benefit to your family. And for those who have transitioned to the reserves, you will often find that local governments are very understanding of the commitment this will entail. Perry Tucker put it well when he said, “If someone is looking for a job with security and benefits that will offer a secure future in retirement, then the city [or county] may be where you want to be. But, if you are more interested in short-term financial gain, then you should look somewhere else for employment.” Because budgets are limited, jobs within the public sector often don’t pay as much as similar jobs in the private sector.

A perk for most civilian employees is the package of benefits—medical insurance, life insurance, and such. If you’ve left the service before retirement, these benefits will

provide help and support to your family. However, if you've retired from the military, your retirement benefits cover many of the same things the local government may offer at no cost to you, so hearing about a robust benefits package in your new job might be a bit grating. However, there may be some supplementary products your organization offers that your family may want, and remember, medical insurance "on the outside" will cover dependent children until they are 26 years of age. Also, whatever isn't being deducted for benefits from your paycheck goes straight to you, so maybe that can take some of the sting out of the whole "less money" thing earlier.

There is a trade-off for those who aren't rolling in dough right now that occurs down the road. One of the best things about working for a local government is that most organizations have really good retirement plans. Even for those who remain in the reserves hoping to one day earn a pension, or have already qualified for a military pension, the additional retirement funds that will be available when you retire from your local government job will provide a wonderful safety net for you and your family. And, for many organizations, your years in the military may count toward your vestment with the new organization's retirement, helping you get more credit and money more quickly.

Now that you have heard from fellow veterans on things that they have experienced, the following sections will provide you with more specific information on local government careers and how to look at matching your skills to local government jobs.



CHAPTER 1

Understanding City and County Positions

1. UNDERSTANDING CITY AND COUNTY POSITIONS

Each city or county entity will have a unique structure. There is not a “standard” organization chart for how a city or county government is organized.

Note for early-career veterans: Many cities and counties follow a pattern when it comes to an entry-level position. The position will often include the word analyst, operator, worker, assistant to, or technician in the title. Following are just a few of the ‘typical’ position titles you might see:

- Management analyst
- Water operator
- Assistant to the city manager
- Sewer technician.

Many of these positions are often open to applicants with no direct experience in the field. For example, a small-city sewer department might simply be looking for someone with vocational knowledge or certificates. A management analyst position might simply require an undergraduate degree in any field. The next section covers specific positions—what they are called and what they actually ‘do.’

OTHER AGENCIES

Remember, also, that there can be multiple local governments in your area. There can be dozens—if not hundreds—of individual suburbs or outlying small towns surrounding major cities. Each of these is a separate entity with separate hiring processes. Do not overlook the employment opportunities in these communities.

Don’t limit your search to city and county governments. Port authorities, airport authorities, and special utility districts (just to name a few) have positions that are similar to city and county governments. You will find many of the same positions noted above in these types of organizations. Here are some sample organizations:

- Port Everglades (a department of Broward County, Florida, government)
- Port of Galveston (a stand-alone port authority)
- Brushy Creek Municipal Utility District (a small utility district)
- Mustang Special Utility District (water and sewer district in Texas).

POSITIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: WHAT THEY ARE, WHAT THEY 'DO'



Animals

- Animal Services
- Zoo



Businesses

- Economic Development
- City Planning
- Marketing & Promotion
Attractions, Events,
- Exhibitions, Creative Industries
- Neighborhood Development &
Revitalization



Rules & Regulations

- Public Safety
- Emergency Preparedness
- Risk Management
- Compliance
- Accreditation
- Legal Services, Ethics
- Historical Preservation
- Cybersecurity



The Environment

- Watershed & Storm
Management
- Sanitation & Recycling
- Land Use & Management
- Sustainability & Urban Design
- Parks



Equipment

- Equipment Operator
- Treatment Plant Operator
- Mechanic Maintenance
- Construction
- Information Technology/GIS



Ideas & Plans

- Strategic Planning
- Performance Management
- Engineering
- Capital Improvement
Projects, Infrastructure
- City Planning
- Economic Development



Numbers

- Accounting, Financial
Planning, Budgeting,
Purchasing
- Economic Development
- Performance Management
& Data Analytics
- Capital Improvement
Projects, Infrastructure



People

- Education Training, Public
Education/Information,
Library
- Health, Family &
Support Services
- Recreation
- Public Service
- Human Resources,
Benefits, Organizational
Development
- Legal Services, Courts

Icons made by <http://www.freepik.com>.

The previous section provided an overview of the wide variety of positions in local government. This section offers information on a cross-section of positions—what those positions are and what they ‘do’ in local government.



ANIMALS

Animal services departments often handle animal control (dealing with potentially dangerous pets and animals, enforcing noise and zoning ordinances related to pets and other animals, picking up stray animals, removing nuisance animals from residential areas, and cleaning up animal carcasses from roadways) and adoption services (connecting eligible animals with forever homes).

Many municipalities across the country have zoos that employ a range of jobs from zookeepers, who clean cages and care for animals, to dieticians and veterinary aides. Some offer education programs for the community.



BUSINESSES

If you enjoy working with business groups and people to build new businesses, strengthen the local economy, and encourage others to come together and make life better where you live, then there are several areas of city or county government that might be of interest to you.

Economic development offices are responsible for meeting with potential businesses to encourage and incentivize them to locate their business within your area. They also spend time scouting out locations, working with local chambers of commerce and visitors bureaus to help “sell” the city or county to others, and meeting with city and county leaders to strategize about growth.

Marketing and promotion positions exist within some larger governmental entities to help the city or county as a whole or to help individual departments launch new initiatives, educate the public, and/or draw attention to great existing programs. People won’t use or support what they don’t know about, and folks in this career field help get the word out.

If you’re interested in the arts or events but still have an interest in the business side and promotion, then working in a department that plans and manages **attractions, events, exhibitions, or creative industries** might be for you. Some municipalities and counties own or manage museums or outdoor art spaces, sponsor festivals or community events, and/or work with production companies to set up film, television, or video shoots. Jobs in this area require creativity, planning, networking, and promotion.

Planning departments are responsible for shaping the look and feel of the community. Planning folks consider the layout of the city or county as a whole; determine where commercial, industrial, and residential zones should be; and help residents navigate the area through roads, sidewalks, bicycle paths, and more.

If you'd prefer to focus on a particular area within a city, then work in **neighborhood development and revitalization** might be for you. Folks in this area of municipal government make concentrated efforts to plan, design, and curate specific parts of town to help them become strong, vibrant parts of the community. Folks in this field may also turn their attention to a neglected area of town and help it regain its former glory.



RULES AND REGULATIONS

If you love living life “by the book,” then a career in one of these fields might be for you.

Public safety may include law enforcement (police or sheriff's departments), fire services, and/or emergency medical services. While careers in these fields do interact heavily with people, the backbone of these fields is composed of laws, regulations, protocols, and standards. If you're good with details and following procedures, careers in this field might be a good fit.

Emergency preparedness is all about getting ready for what can go wrong and having a plan for that. While this field requires a lot of planning and communicating with other entities, it is perfect for those who like to come up with detailed plans that respect the rights and responsibilities of various jurisdictions and groups. Plus, this area often has to manage grants and reporting requirements for equipment, training programs, and more.

If you're interested in workplace and equipment or vehicle safety, then **risk management** might be the area for you. Making sure things and people are working properly and safely in order to avoid accidents and injuries is what risk management is all about. Many risk management offices also investigate city- or county-related accidents and damages, and some even help to coordinate and manage workers' compensation programs.

If you like making sure others are doing what they are supposed to, then a career in **compliance** might be for you. Any area that has an ordinance or standard that needs to be enforced could have some sort of compliance service or department. For instance, some places have code compliance officers and/or inspectors to make sure buildings or construction projects are doing things correctly. There can also be food

or restaurant inspectors, as well as folks who check for illegal dumping and unkempt property.

Various departments within a city or county might seek to attain **accreditation** through their appropriate accrediting agency or group. Whether the accreditation applies to the department as a whole (the zoo or the police department) or to a program within the department (the paramedic training program within the fire department), larger local governments sometimes have staff that help with the accreditation processes of collecting data, writing reports, and coordinating site visits.

Keeping things honest, fair, and aboveboard is the work of **legal services** and/or **ethics oversight officers**. In addition to trying cases and investigating possible policy or practice violations, careers in legal services or ethics oversight allow folks to promote diversity in hiring and promotion practices and provide training on ethical decision-making.

If you have an interest in history mixed with a good measure of building codes, architecture, and economic development, work in **historic preservation** might be right up your alley. Finding, researching, preserving, restoring, and promoting key historical sites, homes, and artifacts contributes to the richness of the communities in which we live, and careers in this field help to tell the stories of our history and heritage.

If technology and information are your forte, then working with **cybersecurity** might be more your speed. Local governments deal with a massive amount of information, and someone has to keep that information safe and secure. Setting up firewalls, establishing information permissions, and creating storage solutions that are impenetrable to hackers and other malcontents are important components of this field, in addition to establishing local policies and procedures to keep the network safe.



THE ENVIRONMENT

Local governments provide lots of opportunities to have a direct impact on the environment and the safety and sustainability of the world in which we live.

If you're interested in protecting the creeks, rivers, lakes, and other waterways where you live, and the land that surrounds them, you may be interested in a career in **watershed and stormwater management**. Jobs in these areas help protect the land and water in the environment from contamination and harmful erosion by studying and guiding paths for rainwater run-off, as well as inspecting for illegal dumping and possible industrial or commercial contamination.

If your concern is with garbage and finding better ways to dispose of waste,

then a career in **sanitation and recycling** might be for you. Many city and county governments have trash or solid waste services, and more entities are adding recycling programs and centers in an effort to reduce waste and protect our earth. Some governments include sewage and wastewater removal and conditioning services under this heading since more entities are finding ways to “recycle” effluent water.

Land use and management departments take an active role in deciding the best uses for various land resources within the area. Not only does this area help to protect natural resources and support conservation efforts, it also helps to shape the layout of the city or county and to enforce various codes and standards related to how land is used within its jurisdiction.

If land use and management sounds kind of interesting, but you’d rather be situated within a larger city, then a career in **sustainability and urban design** might be of more interest to you. Folks in this field make long-term plans concerning development and infrastructure for more populous areas to make sure that their communities can be powered and run in the most efficient ways possible.

Creating and maintaining spaces where people can come together outside are a couple of the major functions of **parks** departments. Parks can be specialized areas for specific purposes, like ballfields or equestrian parks, or they can be open greenspaces that are designed to give residents that “back to nature” feeling. From mowing and landscaping to planning and building, parks work is varied but still closely tied to the environment.



EQUIPMENT

Instead of green things, maybe more industrial-type things are your idea of a good time. There are various kinds of jobs in local governments that use tools, intricate machines, and large pieces of equipment to do more than make some noise.

Equipment operators exist within many areas of city and county governments. Folks in this job category typically operate large pieces of equipment, like backhoes, dump trucks, tractors, and/or trash trucks, to name a few, and they can be engaged in a variety of tasks, from digging water lines and building roads to maintaining land and picking up waste.

Plant operators work within city or county public utility departments. Many local governments run their own water treatment plants, electrical plants, natural gas plants, and/or telephone/ telecommunications cooperatives. Plant operators might

work within the physical plants where the utility is housed, or they might support the infrastructure (lines, pipes, and such) through which the utility is delivered. Many jobs in this area require special credentials, and some local governments might be willing to let you learn on the job.

If you can fix vehicles and equipment, local governments are interested in you! Cities and counties need **mechanics** of all kinds for a wide variety of work. While most local governments do have fleet vehicles and specific equipment that needs to be repaired and maintained, many entities also have airports, rapid mass transit, and other specialized means of moving people around that have to be fixed and maintained.

If you can repair and maintain buildings, or systems commonly used in buildings (like heating, air conditioning, electrical), then a career in **maintenance** can be very fulfilling. Work in this field can vary depending on the age of the buildings, the needs of the city, and the budget of the organization.

Some cities have **construction** crews to build small projects and/or structures to fulfill new initiatives, proposed expansions, and other things. If you're a "ground-up" kind of person, this field might be just right for you.

If you're into more technological sorts of projects, then a career in information technology or GIS might be for you. **Information technology** departments often do everything from running cable and setting up equipment, to troubleshooting software, to programming and generating new code. **Geographic information system (GIS)** departments are responsible for tying electronic data to physical locations, giving cities new looks at program usage, call patterns, and infrastructure mapping.



IDEAS AND PLANS

Maybe you aren't a hands-on kind of person; maybe you're more interested in dreaming, planning, and getting things organized. If those activities sound more like what you're interested in, then consider a career in one of these fields.

Folks who work in **strategic planning** are interested in looking forward into the future, determining the possible needs of the city, and then developing plans to address those needs. If you're all about what could be and how to get there, this area might be for you.

Performance management is an emerging field in local government, so more organizations are looking for folks who are able to keep track of goals, performance indicators, and budgets, and to compare those numbers to the aspirational targets housed within planning documents. If you like to keep tabs on how departments are

doing compared to their stated goals, this is the area for you.

If you like the science and physics of designing and building things, then a job in the **engineering** department might be for you. Engineering work with a local government can cover a variety of projects and areas (from traffic and roads to construction and planning). Work in this area often requires specialized degrees, training, and/or certification. Sometimes, they will pay for your training.

In some jurisdictions, there are folks who manage **capital improvement projects** and/or **infrastructure improvement projects**, projects that typically include large construction or improvement projects. If your city or county is going to undertake a large road improvement project, a building project, or some other project that's going to cost a lot of money, then someone needs to oversee design and permitting and/or manage contracts, contractors, timelines, and every detail along the way.

If you're an "everything has a place and everything in its place" kind of person, then a career in **planning and development** might be for you. Planners help to shape the look and feel of a jurisdiction, deciding where houses, businesses, and industries should be located and how the flow of vehicles and people around those areas will be impacted. They also work with all sectors of the community, from home owners to developers and business folks.

As mentioned earlier, **economic development** offices are responsible for meeting with potential businesses to encourage and incentivize them to locate their business within your area. Folks in this line of work can have a big impact on the long-term economic future of a city or county.



NUMBERS

If nothing makes your heart sing quite like a long column of numbers, then there are several areas of local government that might be of interest to you.

Local governments always need folks who can plan, make, and track purchases and expenditures. There are lots of opportunities in accounting, financial planning, budgeting, and purchasing that may flex your fiscal muscles. From determining where the money will come from and how to use it to actually buying and paying for things, careers in these areas provide great opportunities for your numerical interest.

Economic development has already been mentioned a couple of times, but there is a lot of number work that goes into putting together market analyses, incentive packages, budget projections, and the other documents that make your city or county attractive to new businesses and industries.

An emerging field for many larger organizations is the area of **performance management and data analytics**. In this field, you'd be working directly with data to chart trends, track performance indicators and goals, and help the organization find areas of waste or improve efficiency. If you believe a good data set can answer a multitude of questions, this area might be for you.

As previously mentioned, folks in **capital improvement projects** and **infrastructure improvement projects** are responsible for big projects, and they need good numbers folks to lead projects to successful and on-budget conclusions.



PEOPLE

Many of us are “people” people—we love interacting and working with other people. There are several areas within local government that allow us to get our fill of the folks in our communities.

Many local governments have opportunities under the **education** umbrella—training, public education/information, library, zoo, health department, schools, and school systems. If you enjoy helping people learn new skills, improve their lives, and more, then a job in an education capacity might be for you.

Another area where you can potentially impact a lot of folks is in **health or family and support services** departments. Many of these jobs are directly related to healthcare or social work fields, so there's an immediate opportunity to directly serve the folks within your community by providing quality healthcare, assistance in navigating public and private social and safety programs, and support for folks through times of change, transition, and growth.

If you like interacting with people in a fun and supportive atmosphere, then a job in **recreation** might work for you. Many local governments have different programs depending on the age group being served and the needs of the community. If you like playing dominoes with senior residents in the morning and teaching kids games after school, then consider a career in recreation.

While many of our first responders must consider laws and regulations, their jobs are really about serving people. Therefore, a career in **public safety** might be a good choice for someone whose heart is to help. Fire, police, and EMS personnel are on the front line of helping people with whatever they need, right when they need it.

If you like to interact with people, and don't mind a lot of paperwork, then perhaps a career in **human resources, benefits, or organizational development** might be for you. Human resources professionals help hire new employees, get them plugged into the organization, and help them with all parts of the employee life cycle. Benefits

personnel focus on insurance coverage and other perks for employees, while those in organizational development devote their time to growing people and the organization in mutually beneficial and positive ways.

If you have specialized knowledge or skills, and you like working with people within legal contexts, then a career in **legal services** or within a **court** might be for you. Local governments need clerks, paralegals, lawyers, judges, bailiffs, and sometimes probation officers or marshals to serve the local community. From traffic tickets to code violations and everything in between, folks in these areas help people live safely and fairly within their communities.

So, what if all of these areas sound really interesting and you can't choose just one? Well then, maybe you need to focus on **city or county management**. Folks in this field need to love wearing multiple hats, making lots of decisions, and serving all sectors of the community. If you like your fingers in a little bit of everything and you have previous management experience, then you might consider a career as a management analyst, an assistant to an administrator, or as a city or county manager.

CHECK OUT OTHER LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

In addition to the city or town where you find yourself, or your hometown, look around: there may be dozens of other cities within a reasonable commuting distance. In some metropolitan areas, the number of local governments can number in the hundreds. In addition to cities and counties, there are specialized governments (a local water and sewer authority or a parks district), regional governmental agencies, and offices of state and federal agencies. School districts employ far more than just teachers. Look at all the many local governments that are constantly looking for talent.



CHAPTER 2

Skills Translation

2. SKILLS TRANSLATION

When a military veteran is getting ready to separate from the service or preparing for future employment after separation, it is often difficult to relate military experience to specific jobs or job qualifications. We often become so rooted in trying to equate specific skills acquired in occupational specialties, but specific military duties do not easily convert to civilian positions. However, if you break down the duties and responsibilities held by anyone in any position of military leadership, regardless of size or area of responsibility, you will see that many of the skills compare.

Understanding the skills translation dynamic involves three main factors. First, is the skill set you have based on your specific career experience. Second, there's how you think those skills will fit the job you are seeking. And third, you must be mindful of what the hiring authority (board, council, citizen panel, etc.) understands about your military experience and how it will translate. On this last point, you can probably assume the hiring authority has little or no military experience and will not innately understand how your skills might fit beyond the obvious elements, i.e., overseeing a lot of people or budgeting. So, you must be prepared to tell that story and convince them of the utility and transferability of your military experience.

Military Skills and Experience	How It Translates to Municipal Career
Leadership	This is pretty obvious. All organizations with people need leadership. Apart from setting the tone and strategic direction for an organization, you could find yourself devoting a lot of time to staff development.
Strategic Planning	Also, fairly straightforward. Some municipalities have well-developed strategic plans and some do not.
Communication	Getting out and about to see people in person always trumps email. If you have experience leading teams or organizations with multiple shifts or dispersed locations, you will definitely rely on those skills.

Military Skills and Experience	How It Translates to Municipal Career
Financial Management	<p>This will be a perceived gap in your skill set. The level of detail required in budgeting and financial oversight will likely exceed what you did in the military, unless your career field happened to be in finance. If you are a senior veteran, you were probably involved in budgetary decision-making but also probably had a resource advisor who made the sausage for you. Depending on the staffing structure of your municipality, you could be expected to be the sausage maker. But here's the good news: You can probably learn it very quickly, and after a budget cycle or two, you'll be an old pro. And there are a lot of resources ICMA or your regional/state entity can offer.</p>
Collective Bargaining	<p>This will be another perceived gap in your skill set: collective bargaining and interacting with unions boils down to people skills, which ultimately leads back to core tenets of leadership. If you listen to people, try to understand their perspective, and can effectively communicate, then you will be an outstanding negotiator and have no problem with labor-management relations. Collective bargaining also requires good organization to keep track of proposed changes as well as numbers, so you can calculate potential impacts to your budget. It's not rocket science, but your hiring authority will be leery of your lack of collective bargaining experience, so be ready to discuss it.</p>
Policy Review/ Development	<p>Remember how much you hated that staff job and how tedious it was to update policy documents? Every municipality has policies for just about everything imaginable. The bad news? You won't be familiar with state law that drives those policies. The good news? You understand the process and can figure it out. And there's more good news--your local/regional municipal organization and ICMA have lots of tools and resources to help you. It's a very collaborative career field.</p>
Personnel Management	<p>Like leadership, this is another obvious skill that should be evident to your hiring authority. You will probably have an HR director but your experience with hiring and interviewing (if you worked with GS civilians) documenting substandard performance, conducting mid-term feedback and annual performance evaluations, and recognizing outstanding work...these are all crucial skills and depending on your particular situation, could be in great demand for the municipality.</p>

Military Skills and Experience	How It Translates to Municipal Career
Event Coordination and Planning	<p>Remember all the “dry runs” and preparation of the tour route, checking and double/triple checking the audio visual setup in the HQ conference room? Remember all of the meetings to review every single detail of the itinerary? Here’s the good news: those skills might not have been in vain! You’ll probably get to host a visit from a senator or governor or be responsible for planning a conference or workshop. You’ll be the most experienced person on the team to get it planned and done right.</p>
Elected Official or Senior Leader Engagement	<p>As you might expect, these skills will also translate very well as you engage with your elected select board, council, or commissioners. These elected officials come in all shapes and sizes, backgrounds, and levels of experience. But you have to be polite and courteous at all times.</p>

When drafting a resume specific to a government position you want to apply for, you need to relate your experiences with these skills in mind. Many are overlapping and easy to grasp, such as leadership and supervision, but others may need some additional thought. We use human resources skills when we counsel or discipline subordinates, schedule and conduct training, and approve leave and special passes. As a leader, you have had to budget time, resources, and manpower, much like a city manager would. Military leaders at all levels use critical thinking and problem-solving skills on a daily basis. We need to be able to communicate that expertise to those in a position to give us an opportunity to get a foot in the door. Even after only a few years of military service, you probably have more supervisory experience (leading a team) and independent decision-making experience than any civilian applicant for the job. Talk up the experiences that sharpened these skills that you possess.

In the military, enlisted and officers are trained differently; therefore, their skills base may be translated differently. Enlisted personnel typically have stronger technical skills related to their military occupational specialty, while officers typically are trained in more general management with less technical skills, maybe excluding some types of positions such as a pilot. It is important to understand the difference when translating these skills on a resume.

ENLISTED-BASED SKILLS EXAMPLES

General skill: squad leader of three soldiers; translated skill: supervisor of three personnel.

Technical skill: troubleshoot electrical and avionics systems of the AH 64D Apache helicopter; translated skill: strong problem-solving skills of highly technical and complicated systems and processes.

OFFICER-BASED SKILLS EXAMPLES

General skill: platoon leader of 45 soldiers; translated skill: mid-level manager of 45 personnel of varying technical specialties.

Technical skill: logistics commander for a battalion of 350 troops; translated skill: provided logistics support for 350 personnel for administrative, training, and in-field operations.



CHAPTER 3

Building Your Resume

3. BUILDING YOUR RESUME

Let's face it, no one likes writing a resume. And when you transition out of the military, you will run into hiring managers and human resource personnel with little understanding of the value military experience provides in the areas of leadership and management and the transferability of those skills, knowledge, and abilities to civilian public service.

It's always important to note that the art form for a veteran's resume at any career stage is to structure it in the same "dialect" of English spoken in the target community. You want to explain how the skills or leadership abilities that you gained on active duty are the identical skills and leadership attributes sought by the community.

Here are some tips on building a resume from Dr. Frank Benest, ICMA's senior advisor for Next Generation Initiatives.

1. Contact Information

Put your contact information (home address, work and home and/or cell phone numbers, and work and/or personal email addresses) at the top of the resume.

2. Objective

Skip it. An objective takes up space on the resume plus it adds little value. If you apply for a specific position, it meets your objective.

3. Length

It depends. For entry-level jobs, one or two pages are fine. For mid-level jobs, you should try to keep the resume to two or three pages. For senior manager or executive positions, three or four pages are appropriate.

4. Font

Hiring managers are often baby boomers, some of whom are vision-challenged, so use a font size of 12 and avoid use of italics and fancy fonts. Use a clean, easy-to-read, and business-like font, such as Times Roman, Arial, or Georgia.

5. Education or Professional Experience First?

Again, it depends. If you have a fair amount of work experience, you should place "Professional Work Experience" first in the resume and "Education" last. If you do not have much work experience and your educational background is solid, put "Education" at the front and then provide "Professional Work Experience." List professional experience in reverse chronological order with the most recent experience first.

6. Education

Put your most recent education first. If you do not have a lot of experience in the subject area of the position that you are seeking (e.g., economic development, environmental management), you can include several classes or major projects or papers in the subject area.

Under “Education,” you should include any certifications earned on the job.

7. Quantifiable or Verifiable Results

Wherever possible, show tangible results from your job efforts. Quantify your job responsibilities and the results of your efforts or indicate verifiable results.

8. Skills, Knowledge, and Qualifications

Don’t include a separate section on skills, competencies, knowledge, or qualification areas, especially at the beginning of the resume. It will appear to the reviewer that you are trying to hide your job experience until later in the resume. Resume screeners in the HR department or the hiring manager in the department want to see your specific education and job positions upfront.

9. Bolded Subheads Reflecting Functions of the Position

This is important. Most resume screeners or hiring managers will spend five or six seconds scanning your resume. They will focus on your education and job experience. In scanning your resume, they tend not to read a lot of verbiage, which runs together under each position listed. Therefore, you should use bolded subheads under your most recent or your two most recent positions. These subheads should correspond to and reflect the skills or functions of the positions that you are seeking. For instance, you can use some of the following subheads:

- Staff Supervision
- Budget Preparation and Management
- Program Development
- Facility Management
- Team Leadership
- Personnel Administration.

10. Internships and Volunteer Experience

Include internships and volunteer experience under “Professional Experience,” especially if you need to show skills and experience beyond your limited paid work (you do not need to indicate if an internship is paid or unpaid).

If you have ample paid work experience, you should not include internships or community service under “Professional Experience.” You can create a separate section titled “Other Experience” or “Community Involvements.”

Use “pro bono” instead of “volunteer” service.

11. Professional Involvement, Affiliations, and Awards

Include a section near the end of the resume titled “Professional Involvement and Affiliations” where you can list membership in professional associations, especially if you serve as an officer or on a committee, or have taken on some other leadership responsibilities.

If you have a lot of professional or community involvements, select the ones that are most relevant or impressive.

If you or your team have earned any awards, list them here.

A cautionary note: Don’t get carried away! You do not need to attach copies of awards and certificates. A simple list is more effective than pages of attachments.

12. Personal Interests

Unless your leisure or other personal pursuits are relevant to the position, don’t include them.

13. References

Typically, you should not put references in the body of the resume unless the hiring agency specifically asks for them. Listing references takes up space on the resume plus it is sometimes hard to ensure that your references will resonate with the hiring manager. If the agency does ask for references, you should use professional references only (again, unless they ask for personal or non-professional references) and include them in the cover letter. Usually, you should not include elected officials as references unless you worked directly for them or you are applying for a chief executive position.

Assuming that you do not list references, the hiring manager or HR department staff will request references for the finalists.

Contact appropriate references early on and get them lined up even before any recruitment process is initiated. When asked for references, you should provide contact information.

If you do not have extensive work experience, some well-regarded references included in the cover letter may help differentiate you from others who also do not have a lot of experience.

14. Cover Letter

Provide a cover letter of no more than one page in length, preferably one-half to two-thirds of a page. Ensure that the cover letter is not addressed “To Whom It May Concern” or to the “Public Works Director.” Rather, you need to find out who is making the hiring decision and address the cover letter to that person by name and position, even if you are required to submit your resume to the HR department.

In the cover letter, cite professional experience, qualifications, or unique skills that make you particularly suited for the job or any traits that are being sought by the hiring authority. You need to emphasize in the cover letter your competitive edge in seeking the job.

15. Online Applications

Remember to include your resume with an online application. Most job boards allow you to attach or insert your resume into the electronic application. It is best to attach your resume as a pdf file. If the job board or web site does not allow attachments and only allows you to copy and paste the resume into the comment section, then get rid of all special characters and text effects. Bullet points, bold, italics, and other special effects should be removed because they either do not come through at all or are turned into other characters making the resume hard to read.

Complete any online application without referencing “see resume,” even if some of the information is duplicated. You want the hiring manager to use a familiar format (their application), augmented by your polished resume when considering you for a position.

OTHER TIPS

- Gear your resume specifically toward the position or promotion that you are seeking. Do not rely on a standard resume.
- Keep a resume file and throw in notes about key accomplishments, awards, and possible references as you think of them. This file of notes will help you easily update your resume when you need to.

- Update your resume and keep it updated even when you are not actively seeking a new job. It is easier to tweak a resume than to create an entirely new one.
- Spell check!
- Ask a trusted colleague or coach to critique your resume and identify any skill or experiential gaps that you need to fill over time as you pursue advancement.
- Send your updated resume to coaches so they can keep an eye open for appropriate opportunities.
- Send your updated resume to executive recruiters and ask for an in-person or telephone meeting to explore opportunities in the profession (or request a coach to send your resume, and then you can follow up with a meeting). Remember, requesting a meeting with a recruiter is not a burden on recruiters—they need “product” to peddle, especially in a time of scarce talent.
- Send your updated resume in advance of an informational interview with a department head or chief executive or other senior manager inside or outside your organization.
- Bring copies of your resume and references with you to any interview. Don't assume everyone has a copy, even if you sent it in advance.
- Use your resume to participate in LinkedIn or other social media sites.
- When you apply online, print the application and resume you have submitted so you can see exactly what the hiring manager will see.



CHAPTER 4

Handling the Interview Process

4. HANDLING THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

You have translated your military skills, identified the local government job you want, and submitted a great resume. You filled out the mountain of application forms and required documents. Now you get the phone call/email saying you've been selected for an interview. You're excited, satisfied, anxious, and impatient—probably all at the same time. There are a lot of great resources on the web for handling interview questions. Here are a few tips tailored just for you.

This is probably one of the biggest areas in which a veteran may have some anxiety because interviewing is not something that is done regularly in the military. However, many veterans that have made the transition to civilian careers liken the interview to either a promotion or other type of board a service member may have experienced. So, most veterans are really prepared for the interview process, they just know it by another name.

PRIOR TO THE INTERVIEW

Your military background will help you prepare. You may have been before a promotion board or an awards board before. While the preparation may not be identical, the preparation process is very similar.

1. Do your homework (i.e., assess the situation). Learn about the city/county by browsing the website. In larger cities/counties, the department you applied to will probably have its own website. Prepare for sample questions you know you will encounter:

- How does your military experience apply to this position?
- Tell us about an event or project that you did very well.
- How do you interact with others? Are you good at working on teams?
- Why do you want to work 'here' (i.e., versus federal government, state government, or private sector)?

2. Practice the interview (i.e., 'rehearse' the operation). You probably found during your military career that "rehearsals" before any operation, while tedious, really helped the final product. Find someone to ask you some questions. Look up your old "battle buddy," ask your spouse, or maybe you know someone in local government (even better!) . . . just practice the process of ask and answer.

3. Plan to arrive early. Plan to get to your interview location about 10-15 minutes early. When you get there, smile and greet everyone warmly. You probably will be met by someone you will eventually work with or who may be on your interview panel. Relax, breathe, and get ready for a great interview.

THE INTERVIEW

Every interview will be different. Even if you interview for multiple jobs within the same city or county, the interview panel process may be different. This handbook will not be able to give you a 'standard' interview format. That said, here are a few tips that generally apply:

- **Answer the question, but not more than the question.** Think about the context of each question from the perspective of your potential employer. Your interview panel (or hiring manager) is interviewing multiple people for this position, and they are looking for someone who will add value to their department. When asked, "tell us a little about yourself", don't say "I got out two months ago and this looked like a good job." On the other hand, don't start with your birth and give an autobiography of every aspect of your military career. Find a good middle range that describes you in a way that will be interesting to the interview panel (or hiring manager). Frame yourself in a manner that shows how you will add value to their organization. Answer questions in "civilian" terms, avoiding military acronyms or lingo. Not everyone will know what those letters stand for, and not everyone will be comfortable asking you to translate.
- **Watch your tempo.** You may or may not be nervous, but you have spent time in an organization where getting things done quickly is valued. You may think you are answering the question with all the relevant information, but your interviewer just hears a steady drone of facts and data. Modulate your voice, shift eye contact between panel members, 'listen' to the cadence of your own voice, and try to keep a conversational tempo.
- **Ask for feedback during the interview.** Unlike a promotion board in the military, it's perfectly acceptable to ask questions of your panel. For example, let's say you're applying for a position as a sewer technician, and you have no previous experience as a sewer technician. You are asked "How would you fix a leak in a sewer main?" You prepared for this, and you give examples from your career of how you were given a new task or assignment, quickly "ramped-up" on your own, and learned how to adapt to a new situation. Once you've finished your example (that was concise and in conversational tempo!), take a moment to ask the panel, "Was that helpful in understanding how I would take on the task?" In some cases, the panel may not be looking for your technical expertise so much as they are looking to see how adaptive and creative you are.

POST INTERVIEW

- **Write personalized thank you notes immediately.** It seems like a small thing, but an applicant who is perceived as grateful for just the opportunity to interview will oftentimes be rated higher than one who feels he/she is supremely qualified for the position. Remember, you asked them for the chance to interview, and you got it. That's reason enough to offer thanks.
- **Assess how you've done.** Make notes for yourself for the next level interview or the next interview elsewhere.

OTHER TIPS

- **Connect with an ICMA coach to help you prepare for the interview.** Your coach will provide you with better understanding of the interview process and may even do a mock interview with you.
- **Request informational meetings with people who are familiar with the local government.** Your goal is to understand the priorities, issues, problems, and needs of the local government and the specific position for which you are interviewing. A good coach can be very helpful in guiding you in this research.
- **Prepare a short introductory “elevator” speech of no more than three minutes.** Use it to highlight skills and show how your experience and talents would be a great fit for the position.
- **Know yourself. Know your strengths and weaknesses.** What do you like about work, what do you dislike about work? It is important to get the right fit for you and the employer.
- **Make sure you give a concise and complete response to questions.** Many jurisdictions use the behavioral-based interviewing process, which is a technique used by employers to evaluate a candidate's past experiences and behaviors in order to determine their potential for success. An example of a behavioral-based interview question is: Give me an example of how you exerted leadership during a difficult time, as opposed to: What is your leadership style? (You can google behavioral-based interviewing for more information).

- **The best way to answer any question is to organize your response in three steps by remembering the acronym E.A.R. as follows:**

E = Event: Think of an actual event or process that illustrates the question being asked.

A = Action: State the action(s) you took during this event or process and the reasons for your actions.

R = Results: State the results of your actions both in the short-term and long run.

You can use this formula to respond to any question, whether it has to do with a technical issue (such as budgeting) or a management issue, such as dealing with difficult people. It is important to provide examples in answering questions that are relatable to local government.

- **Interviewing is an art and skill: the more you practice, the better you get.**

Ask your coach or someone you know in local government to conduct a mock interview with you.



CHAPTER 5

Focusing on Professional Development

5. FOCUSING ON PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

As you transition from the military to a local government role, you should know that you already have one of the most important skill sets to succeed: leadership. However, local government professionals require a new and improved skill set that includes building collaborative partnerships across all sectors – residents’ groups, neighboring communities, and governments at all levels, as well as private and nonprofit organizations. They must be adept and willing to seek expertise and resources outside the bounds of their own organizations. Community demands for services are increasing. State and federal funding for local government is at an all-time low. And to complicate matters is a growing list of difficult social and economic issues that transcend geographic boundaries. Now more than ever, local governments are on their own to find sufficient resources or solutions to fully meet their communities’ wide-ranging needs.

To meet those demands, it’s important that you commit yourself to professional development. Doing so provides you with knowledge and proficiencies needed to change and shape your career. Below are some professional development tips:

DEVELOP A PLAN ...THIS IS A CONTINUOUS JOURNEY

Your job in the military likely dealt with making lots of plans in order to be ready for every type of contingency that could be thrown at you. That mindset will serve you well as you embark on your civilian career. There are a number of things you can do to prepare for the task of finding a civilian job.

First, conduct an honest assessment of your professional skills by reviewing your fitness reports and asking respected peers for feedback. You may recognize patterns of strengths and weaknesses that others saw in you that you were not aware of. Ask your peers for specific examples: these will be useful for your job interviews and will come in handy as you prepare your resume and cover letter.

Second, find resume-building workshops for veterans. The Veterans Administration is a good place to start, but many other organizations now offer this service. After reviewing your fitness reports, you can better frame the work you accomplished, which will help to create a more succinct and clear resume that employers can understand quickly. Creating a word picture of yourself is a great way to approach this task.

Third, ask your superior officers to serve as references and keep up with their contact information so that is current, since they will likely be moving around and may be hard to find.

LOOK FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Once you have a polished resume and cover letter, it is worthwhile to start at least reviewing the job openings at local governments. Submit applications and start doing your homework on these local governments by reviewing the website, attending city council meetings, and reading meeting minutes. Even if you may not feel it is a good fit, applying and interviewing helps to get some interviews under your belt so you can refine your interviewing skills.

Continuous professional development is critical while you are applying for these positions. During your self-assessment and review of local government skills, you likely identified some weaknesses. Seek out training to improve on those weaknesses. Research whether a graduate program in public administration is feasible and beneficial for the job you are seeking. This is increasingly the best graduate degree to have and many universities now offer the courses online or at night to better accommodate a professional's schedule.

ICMA is committed to providing the professional development support veterans need throughout their local government career. Through its leadership and professional development programs, your new and improved leadership skills will help you lead the way and thrive in your career. For more information on ICMA University programs, visit icma.org/university.

Never underestimate how competitive the job market is for these jobs, particularly the ones that require leadership experience. You will likely be interviewing with city staff that have no military background and it is important to not come off as arrogant or superior. Having an attitude of professional curiosity in the challenges of the position and respect for staff, regardless of whether you think you could run circles around them, is critical and often comes with practice.

FIND A MENTOR

Mentors will be a tremendous asset in getting your foot in the door. They can range from recently retired city managers or department heads living in the area to local professors within the public administration department. Offering to take them to lunch is a good, informal way of showing your appreciation for them taking the time to speak with you. They can provide enormous insight into the history of local governments and the best places to work. Ask them to review your resume and get honest feedback. Request to pay them for regular consultations as your career plans progress. The good ones will refuse this offer, but will appreciate the gesture.

SOCIAL MEDIA BRANDING

Social media is a tool you should use, but less is best. Of course, LinkedIn is the best professional social media platform for job seekers, but keep your personal profiles clean of much content other than photos of your family and showing off your fine wood-working skills. No political opinions or rants. Use common sense as you think about what your subordinates in the military would put on their social media pages that would get them into trouble.

PAY IT FORWARD

Once you've found your dream government job and settled into a long and prosperous career, don't forget to help other veterans with their transitions. If you know of another veteran who is joining your organization straight out of service, offer to become a mentor or even just a friend to help with the transition. Continue to walk the mantra of "never leave a man or woman behind" by reaching out and providing the support to others that you wish you had. Whether you just cultivate a relationship one-on-one, establish a small support group in your location, or get involved in ICMA's mentorship program, there are ways you can continue to serve your fellow troops as they join you as civilians.

GET CREDENTIALLED

The ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program recognizes professional local government managers qualified by a combination of education and experience, adherence to high standards of integrity, and an assessed commitment to lifelong learning and professional development. Managers are recognized by ICMA through a peer review credentialing process, and this self-directed program offers an opportunity for interested ICMA members to quantify the unique expertise they bring to their communities.

VETERANS' ACCOUNT:

WHY PURSUING ICMA CREDENTIALLED MANAGER (ICMA-CM) RECOGNITION WAS RIGHT FOR ME



DARRIN TANGEMAN

City Manager, Woodland Park, Colorado

Retired 2015 from U.S. Army Special Forces Officer after 22 years of military service.

Served as chief administrative officer, Pueblo West, Colorado, July 2015-July 2018.

The job market for city managers, deputy city managers, and assistant city managers for mid-size to large municipalities can be very competitive with more than 100 applicants competing for the same position. Often, job postings include expectations of five to seven years of directly relevant experience in municipal management as a requirement to qualify for these positions.

As a military service member, you can and should convey your directly relevant military experience in local government management when applying for city manager positions. It can greatly improve your competitive advantage when an objective third party validates your experience. The ICMA Credentialing process represents an opportunity for an objective third party with expertise in city management to validate your military experience and recognize you as an ICMA Credentialed Manager. This recognition can go a long way to establish qualifying experience with human resource managers or local government recruiting firms.

A veteran can qualify for ICMA Credentialed Manager within three years of post-military service if the ICMA Credentialing Advisory Board validates the following criteria:

- *Completion of a master's of public administration or master's of public policy*
- *Must have served last three years post-military as an executive in local government (full credit position).*
- *Board must validate half credit for eight years of military service in demanding executive roles leading military cross-functional teams.*
- *See the ICMA Credentialing Advisory Board policies and procedures for additional scenarios that qualify for Credentialed Manager status.*

My own personal credentialing story began eight years prior to retiring from the U.S. Army Special Forces, when I chose to pursue an MPA in order to improve my chances of a second career in local government. Although I didn't know it at the time, the completion of an MPA would help me accelerate my timeline for recognition as an ICMA Credentialed Manager. After deciding to retire from military service, I spent more than six months applying for and interviewing for local government executive positions. I was ultimately appointed as chief administrative officer for a local government in Colorado where I served three years before receiving ICMA Credentialed Manager status in July 2018.

I feel strongly that the ICMA credentialing process can provide a competitive advantage for veterans competing for city manager positions throughout the United States. I highly recommend that veterans seeking second careers in local government management begin preparing for the credentialing process before they leave military service by completing an MPA or a master's of public policy.

For those veterans interested in pursuing ICMA Credentialed Manager status, applications are taken four times a year by the ICMA Credentialing Advisory Board. The first step in becoming an ICMA Credentialed Manager is to verify that you are eligible, take the Applied Knowledge Assessment and receive results, and complete the credentialing application. The Advisory Board review process typically takes 3.5 months to send feedback on your status.



CHAPTER 6

Stories from the Front Line

6. STORIES FROM THE FRONT LINE

The following stories were shared by ICMA veterans taskforce members and other veterans in the local government management profession.

JOHN OLINGER

CITY ADMINISTRATOR, LINDSTROM, MN

“I grew up in Golden Valley, Minnesota. As a 17-year-old rebellious teenager, I entered the Air Force in 1976. My initial motivation for the military was my serious dislike of high school, my parents, and myself. I went to high school half a day, and the other half I was in the school work program working at a gas station. I remember thinking one day while I was at work that I didn’t want to get a job that went nowhere. I liked airplanes, so in 1975, at 17 years old, I signed up for the Air Force. Six days out of high school, I was in basic training.

After basic training, I went to tech school in Rantoul, Illinois, to learn aircraft mechanics over four jet engines. At a young 18 years old, I worked on the flight line on KC-135’s and B-52’s in the Strategic Air Command stationed in Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota. Eventually, after six months or so, I was promoted to the crew chief of a KC-135. Looking back, I don’t think that was very wise, but that is what makes the military unique—they can work with less than great material. I was proud, undisciplined, and had little self-control. I was not a good soldier.

After 18 months, because of my own bad choices, I decided the only way to escape sure-to-come consequences was to be reassigned. I signed up for the quickest way to move, Alaska. I was so desperate I signed up for an additional year because the assignment was for three years. I spent three months at McChord AFB, Washington, training on cargo aircraft for the Military Airlift Command: C-141’s, C-5’s and C-130’s. In 1978, I finished my tech school, and with two others in my unit heading for Alaska, we took off on the AICan Highway. I had a Ford F-250 four-wheel drive truck with 50 gallons of gas, and my friend had a GMC four-wheel drive truck with 60 gallons of gas. Our third friend shipped his four-wheel drive on a boat. We towed each other until we ran out of gas, taking turns driving, then we’d stop. The rule was no drugs, no drinking, and just driving.

We made it to Quenelle, Canada, at 2:00 in the morning when my truck, towing my friend’s truck, hit a moose. It took five days to repair my truck, which gave me time to think about my life and this restart. I was reading a book about Charles Manson at the time, which referenced a book by Susan Atkins, one of the Manson murderers called, Child of Satan, Child of God: Her Own Story. It was Susan’s account of what happened and how she came to faith in prison. I found the book in that small town of Quenelle. After reading it, I decided that my life needed a start over, and I determined to do better with this new opportunity in Alaska.

Finally, a week or so late, we arrived in Alaska and started our new assignments at Elmendorf as gas station attendants. MAC planes were not assigned to Elmendorf AFB; we just refueled them on their two-day trips from California to Japan and back. Ironically, I'd moved from refueling cars to airplanes. Anyway, after six months, I got involved in a base church with a group of people who were taking their lives seriously. I still struggled—maturing was not one of the skills that came easy—but I finished my three-year Alaska tour and my five-year military commitment. I received an honorable discharge in December 1981.

Being in the military helped me get to a point where I knew I needed further education. And because I was in Alaska, and had signed up in 1975, I could go to college in Hawaii and pay resident tuition with the Vietnam Era GI Bill. At the U of Hawaii, I received a degree in communications, then moved to Colorado to work with a nonprofit for two years. While there, I determined that I wanted to work in nonprofit organizations as an administrator. I finished an MPA at the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, with the last of my GI Bill.

I'd married in 1987, and in 1989, following my graduation with a master's, we moved home to Minnesota and I found my first six-month internship with Corcoran under Bob Derus, city administrator. I didn't know anything about government; my focus had been in nonprofit and federal administration. But following Corcoran, I was able to get another six-month internship in Minnetonka with Terry Schwerm and Jim Miller. My last internship was in Eagan with Jon Hohenstein and Tom Hedges. These three internships allowed me to gain my first position in city government as the assistant city administrator in Mahtomedi in 1990. After a year or so, I became the acting city administrator and eventually became the city administrator until 1997.

Following Mahtomedi, my family and I moved to China to work at a nonprofit. We spent two years overseas, then we came back and I worked for two years in the Richfield community development department before going back to China for another three years working in a different nonprofit doing community development in Tibet. We returned in 2005, and in 2006, I became city administrator of Lindstrom. We've been here ever since.

I am very grateful for my military career. I realize that it provided me the time and environment to grow and mature. It also set me up for the next phase of my life by providing college benefits, and finally, probably the most important, it taught me that I am a crew chief. Even here in the city, I am using the skills I learned as a crew chief. Back then, I was responsible for an airplane. I didn't know much about the electronics on a plane, but I knew when we had a problem, and I knew who to call. It's very similar here: I know the basics about what makes a city run, but when I need planning advice, I call a planner. When I need engineering advice, I call an engineer, and when we need legal advice, I call the city attorney. Staff are my fellow team members, and we make this city fly safely. I owe almost everything I have and am to the military. The military was very good to me, much better to me than I was to it."

DUSTIN RIEF

CITY ADMINISTRATOR, ORONO, MN

"I joined the Army three days after graduating high school. My background was just a farm kid from Northeast Nebraska before the military. I spent 10 years and 8 months in, getting out in January 2007. My Army career led me all over the country and world. I never stayed in one place or one position very long either due to promotion, training, or deployments. I worked in depot-level maintenance on PATRIOT missile systems, as a training NCO, in battalion S-3, and as a squad leader, platoon sergeant, Apache technical inspector, and division-level staff.

I left the Army with a broad range of experience but no direction that suited me. I attempted real estate investing, worked in sales of commercial helicopters and helicopter parts, and tried the family business in an agriculture equipment dealership, but none of these met my need to be a part of something greater than myself.

In the summer of 2011, my soon-to-be wife had an internship with a city administrator in my hometown. She was struggling to understand what he was asking her to do, and I was able to explain it in a matter of minutes. Weeks later, my soon-to-be wife was on a business trip and met the ICMA Regional VP for Nebraska. He invited us to attend the NCMA annual conference, and the light turned on. This is who I need to be—I need to be a city administrator.

January 1, 2012, I took a leap of faith and started school full time at the University of Nebraska at Omaha to complete my undergraduate in political science. They translated my military training, and I nearly had an associate's degree worth of credit. In March 2013, I began my local government career as a public works specialist in Omaha. I took this position with the full understanding that I needed to gain as much city experience as I possibly could in the shortest amount of time possible. I graduated with a bachelor's in May 2013 and started my MPA that fall.

In June 2015, I began work in my first position as city administrator. I had longer-term goals of getting to the next tier city in order to be stable for my family during the bulk of my career. I am now city administrator of Orono, Minnesota, a third-tier twin cities metro community of 8,000. My experiences are not typical, and it wasn't an easy transition, but I have met my goal and feel I make a positive impact on the residents every day I go to work. I am doing something greater than myself."

DAVID (BUCK) DELLINGER
COO, METRO DEVELOPMENT AND HOUSING AGENCY, NASHVILLE TN

“As a former garrison commander for three years at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, I have very strong feelings about this topic, especially as it relates to government positions. I was able to successfully transition into the COO position for metro development and housing agency for Nashville, Tennessee. We manage and build public housing in addition to managing construction for the city’s major development projects (i.e., the stadium for the Tennessee Titans, Bridgestone Arena for the Nashville Predator NHL team, redevelopment districts, and transit-oriented districts).

For the most part, I’d say that networking put me in the right place at the right time. As far as the city manager positions I pursued, I was a bit frustrated. Perhaps the fault was with my resume, which I thought listed my qualifications and experience, but the feedback that I received from a couple of the city manager employment agencies was that I lacked the requisite experience for city management positions despite my time as a garrison commander and as the chief of staff for the 101st Airborne Division. Ten years of city government experience, which is usually a prereq for CM and deputy CM positions, is just unattainable for a veteran. That said, I landed my current job very quickly and was only in the job market for about 60 days.

I know many of my peer garrison commanders have been hired as CMs. My thoughts on this are that garrison commanders should be introduced and trained by ICMA as part of their introductory courses. Qualified city manager experience needs to be built from day one of command, and ICMA should qualify garrison commanders as city managers. The end state is that when the colonel changes command, he/she has qualified and recognized experience running a federal city. A garrison commander manages budgets, emergency services (police, fire, medical), public works, human resources, etc., just like a city manager. Sure, there are local and state issues, but at Fort Campbell, I was very involved in the Montgomery County, Tennessee, government as well as Christian County, Kentucky, in addition to Tennessee and Kentucky state government.

My only real lack of experience was related to bonds/referendums and other financial mechanisms that helped to finance the city. That said, I’ve picked up the financing strategies quickly in my current job, so that learning curve was steep but manageable. In a city, there’s a financial officer that sweats that stuff anyway, so in my opinion, the lack of financing expertise should not be a disqualifier for a city management position.”

JOHN DEAN, CITY MANAGER, OVILLA, TX

"I spent 20 years in the Army as an enlisted infantryman and special forces soldier. It was in 1997 while on a mission in Bosnia that I figured out what I wanted to do when I grew up. It was to be a city manager. I learned that people working in local government had an impact on the lives of the people on a daily basis whether the people knew it or not. I told my wife, when that mission was over I wanted to be a city manager someday. She did not put much stock in the idea, since I was several years away from being eligible to retire from the Army.

I had the opportunity a couple of years later to get a college degree. As I served as an instructor, I was able to obtain a bachelor's degree and begin work on an MPA degree. My master's program was interrupted by Operation Enduring Freedom, and I did not complete my MPA degree while on active duty. After I retired in 2004, I got a job in my hometown in human resources with a major employer. I quickly worked my way up, taking positions that related to nothing technical I had done in the Army. One thing I had over my peers was that I was never afraid to take a chance and do something I had never done before. In the military, I was trained to always seek out new challenges and to be willing to accept them. I believe that this is one of the greatest assets that veterans bring to the table in the civilian job market in general.

I had not dropped the dream of being a city manager, and in 2007, I was hired as the city manager in my hometown of Broken Bow, Oklahoma. I have been in city management since. I was able to obtain my MPA while I was the assistant city manager in El Reno, Oklahoma.

Networking, persistence, adaptability, and being willing to not start at the top are all very important things that assisted me in my transition. After transitioning, I learned that by applying the values, ethics, leadership, organizational skills, and willingness to learn that I acquired while in the military propelled me faster and farther than my civilian counterparts. My family and I now choose to live in a small rural community with a very high quality of life just outside of Dallas, Texas."

C.O. HOELLE JR. COLONEL USMC (RET)/PRIOR DEPUTY TOWN MANAGER, TOWN OF HILTON HEAD ISLAND

"I was fortunate to follow my 27-year career in the Marine Corps by being selected to serve Hilton Head Island as director of public projects and facilities. As a result of having experienced a "successful transition," the commanding officer of MCAS Beaufort requested that I speak during their transition assistance program. I was happy to do it and stressed the following points:

You've given your best to the Marine Corps and now it's time to transition into the civilian world. The most important criteria will be "job satisfaction." It's out there and it is yours, but you've got to find it and achieve it. Your mentors and networking will definitely help, but you must prepare to adequately compete.

Preparation involves self-awareness of what you have to offer and the ability to convey that to your future employer. There are tools like the Myers Briggs indicator survey to help define your innate style and preferences. The survey is a real eye opener. Additionally, you need to recognize skills that you take for granted. Review your service record book/officer qualification record for the schools you have attended and training received. Recognize that during your service, you have come to work squared away, completed your tasks with discipline and efficiency, and learned to deal with a diverse spectrum of people, probably from a variety of countries. You have achieved promotions that translate to leadership skills that the civilian world seeks and rewards.

You (and your spouse) will need to decide whether you intend to stay in the local area and find a job or find a job and move to where it is located. If moving, will those expenses be covered by your employer, and if so, to what extent? Keep in mind the cost of living where you will reside.

Finally, you will need to know how much money you can initially expect to make and live on. You will need to learn about "benefits" that we take for granted in the armed services, i.e., medical and dental; insurance coverage; retirement plans; federal, state and local taxes; sick pay and vacation time. Be assured that your civilian employer will not start you off with 30 days of paid annual leave!

Bottom line is to find the job that gives you satisfaction and upward mobility. Exceed your employer's expectations and let them fall in love with your positive attitude and work ethic. In turn, you will be appropriately recognized with additional education and training opportunities, promotions, and pay in a professional environment."



APPENDIX A

Cover Letter Sample

YOUR NAME HERE

123 Main St Anytown, XY 00000 | (123) 456-7890 | yourgmailherewithprofessionalhandle

[DATE]

County Manager Search
Board of Commissioner's Office
Generic County
123 Main St
Anytown, XX 00000

Dear [NAME OF RECIPIENT]:

I am writing regarding the [LOCAL GOVERNMENT POSION] position for [CITY/COUNTY]. My resume and references are attached which summarize the applicable skills and experience that are ideally suited for this opportunity.

I am a [RANK] in the [BRANCH OF SERVICE] and will soon be completing nearly [X] years of service to our country. My professional background as a [CURRENT POSITION] features a broad base of experience in diverse areas including [LIST SKILLS HERE].

Furthermore, as a [EARLY/MID CAREER VETERAN OR CAREER OFFICER], I have been fortunate to gain extensive experience in [LIST EXPERIENCE RELATING TO POSITION HERE]. These experiences are underpinned by the highest standards of ethical behavior, integrity, and accountability the public demands of its military professionals.

I am confident the dynamic leadership and communication skills gained in my [BRANCH OF SERVICE] career will help me work with the [POSITION TEAM] to strengthen the [COMMUNITY/COMMUNITIES] of [CITY/COUNTY].

I look forward to discussing my qualifications in greater detail with you.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[YOUR NAME HERE]



APPENDIX B

Resume Sample

YOUR NAME HERE

123 Main St Anytown, XX 00000

Phone: (123) 456-7890

[EMAIL]

www.linkedin.com/in/yournamehere

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Military Veteran with [X] years of proven experience in the [BRANCH SERVICE]. [DELETE IF YOU HAVEN'T TRANSITIONED YET--Attained rank of [X] before transitioning to career in municipal management.] Accomplished measurable results while leading teams of 2,000 people in dynamic, fast-paced environments. Possess a comprehensive background in executive leadership, personnel management, budgeting and financial management, and facilities and construction program management, derived from conducting domestic and global operations in six countries spanning three continents. Consistently exceed expectations of senior leaders, elected officials, and taxpayers. Possess extensive knowledge in strategic planning, communication, innovation, and critical thinking. Recipient of multiple awards for outstanding performance to include the Defense Meritorious Service Medal in the [BRANCH OF SERVICE]. Career supported by a Master of Arts in Security Studies and a Master of Science in Engineering and Environmental Management.

- Leadership
- Innovation
- Human Capital Development
- Strategic Planning
- Communication
- Collaboration / Teamwork
- Policy Review / Execution
- Budgeting / Financial Management
- Project Management

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Generic County, Generic State County Manager

2017 – Present

Chief financial and administrative officer for 285-person organization and \$32.5M annual budget with 11 facilities located on 2 campuses to support nursing home and department of corrections operations for up to 310 residents

- Adopted innovative fiscal plan to manage expense budget and create \$600K offset to fund capital projects while stabilizing County's portion of property tax rate
- Initiated County's first-ever employee climate survey and incorporated feedback into new organizational strategic plan; developed road map to focus on staff development and retention to reduce 40% turnover rate
- Simultaneously navigated two collective bargaining agreements to provide three years of labor harmony, cost certainty, and fair compensation to boost staff recruitment and retention efforts
- Established new employee wellness program with \$30K set aside for fitness and weight loss incentives; program paid immediate dividends with 4.3% decrease in healthcare premiums equaling over \$100K savings

United States Air Force – Various Locations Deputy Chief Executive

19XX – 2017

Led 2,000-person organization responsible for a \$75M annual operating budget, 705 facilities and \$5.6B in infrastructure to support military installation with 81 aircraft, a community of 25,000 people, and five schools.

- Provided fire protection and police force through three fire stations, one police station, and 300 combined police and fire personnel; oversaw community support programs including a library, fitness center, outdoor recreation, arts and crafts, youth sports programs, and three childcare facilities
- Developed organizational strategic plan; provided roadmap for \$950M in new construction to support 30% growth in base population
- Managed consolidation plan to accommodate 500 additional personnel and \$185M in new construction

Chief Executive

Led 190-person organization responsible for training 2,500 Department of Defense firefighters per year with \$4.3M annual operating budget, \$22M vehicle fleet, and \$29M in equipment and trainers.

- Developed strategic plan focused on human capital development, innovation, and training production; refocused failed organization and earned recognition as the Air Force's best training organization in 2014
- Implemented innovative program to improve management of \$4M protective clothing inventory; new logistical tools and database analysis identified \$1M in excess assets and reduced annual purchases by 67%
- Directed safety program featuring 24% decrease in reportable incidents in 2013 compared to annual average; heat stress management program benchmarked by Atlanta International Airport Fire Department

Deputy Chief, Energy Conservation Division

Interpreted federal policy on energy consumption reduction goals to implement innovative programs to meet Air Force's 30% electrical consumption reduction goals.

- Managed Air Force-wide \$320M energy conservation capital improvement project program
- Engaged with Office of Secretary of Defense staff to defend \$25M utility metering investment strategy and preserve Air Force's share of \$150M energy conservation construction funds in corporate budget process

Deputy Chief, Strategic Planning Division

Developed strategic plans and foreign policy positions for the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office.

- Directed effort to create first-ever strategic communication plan for Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office to engage with stakeholders including family members, Congress, veterans' groups, and National Security Staff; increased outreach program effectiveness 40% with more effective, transparent messaging
- Authored \$350M plan to expand manpower and facilities in response to Congressional legislation

Construction Program Manager

Developed, validated, and prioritized \$1B construction program to provide critical global infrastructure at 15 locations; presented annual program for senior leader decision-making and engaged with Congressional staffers.

- Secured \$2.3M for two emergency construction projects to correct potential health and safety violation of drinking water system as well as political concerns over cremation of fallen military members remains
- Modified existing project scoring model to enhance energy conservation features; innovative feature accelerated amount of "green" technologies programmed in new construction projects

Chief of Design and Construction

Led teams at two locations over 4-year period to manage all stages of facility requirements from planning, programming, design, construction, and warranty management.

- Directed 250-person section responsible for delivering 53 wartime construction projects worth \$96M in 6 months including 1.6M square feet of airfield pavement, 1.7M gallons of jet fuel storage, and 9M pounds of munitions for 160 fighter aircraft to fly 6,000 combat missions during Operation IRAQI FREEDOM
- Developed \$253M strategic plan to reshape Cold War-era airfield, improve force protection posture, and decrease maintenance requirements
- Led 17-person team responsible for \$59M airfield construction program supporting 200 personnel during a 4-month deployment to Uzbekistan

EDUCATION

Master of Arts, Security Studies, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA

Master of Science, Engineering and Environmental Management, Air Force Institute of Technology, Dayton, OH

Bachelor of Science, Civil/Environmental Engineering, United States Air Force Academy, Colorado Springs, CO

PUBLICATIONS

"Closing K2." Air Force Civil Engineer. Volume 14, Number 1, 2006.

"Solar Power Lights The Night." Air Force Civil Engineer. Volume 11, Number 4, 2003.

"IFSAC Training Worth Every Cent On Scene." Fire Chief. September 2001.

"Modeling Innovation." Military Engineering. March-April 2001.

"A Few Good Rescue Technicians." Fire Chief. January 2001.

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

Youth Sports Coach, Baseball, Soccer, Basketball (9 seasons)



APPENDIX C

Resources

BOOKS

Breaking into Local Government (ICMA, 2013).

With case studies that highlight the transition of nontraditional managers into professional administrator positions, this guide provides a number of resources in the appendix that will help those who aspire to follow the same career path. Cases include career changers entering the profession from the private sector, military, and other government sectors. In addition, survey results are included and analyzed reviewing the paths respondents took to enter the profession, transferable skills, reasons for changing, first positions held in local government, and more. This guide is the culmination of the work that was done by ICMA member volunteers over a two-year period.

First-Time Administrators Handbook (ICMA, 2017).

To assist managers with their daily challenges, ICMA's First-Time Administrator Task Force prepared this concise yet comprehensive guide. Covers items that should be considered before an interview, during an interview, before accepting a position, and before starting a new position. Describes what might be important for first week, first month, three to six months, and beyond. Both emerging leaders and veteran managers can benefit from this handbook's suggestions.

Managing Local Government: Cases in Effectiveness, 3rd ed., ed. Charldean Newell (ICMA, 2009).

As the perfect complement to ICMA's bestselling *The Effective Local Government Manager*, 3rd edition, this book challenges the reader with real-life dilemmas and sticky scenarios.

Managing Local Government Services, ed. Carl W. Stenberg and Susan Lipman Austin (ICMA, 2007).

The practical, comprehensive guide for meeting the new demands in today's world and ensuring the best service possible. Includes a valuable collection of more than 65 online supplemental materials.

ICMA VETERANS PROGRAMS

Veterans Local Government Management Fellowship

A career-development opportunity designed to generate interest in local government careers among service members who are transitioning out of the military.

icma.org/veterans-local-government-management-fellowship

City-County Management Senior Fellowship Program

The (CMSFP) is a tailorable program designed to enable Army participants to gain a better understanding of city/county management.

icma.org/city-county-management-senior-fellowship-program

NEWSLETTERS

Leadership Matters, ICMA.

A weekly newsletter containing local government job openings and information on ICMA activities and the profession.

PERIODICALS

PM—Public Management, ICMA.

A monthly magazine featuring concise, timely articles on the profession of local government management.

Governing, Congressional Quarterly, Inc.

A monthly magazine with a primary audience of state and local government officials that features articles on a wide range of local government issues.

PROFESSIONAL RESOURCES

ICMA Code of Ethics

The ICMA Code of Ethics, adopted in 1924, provides a set of professional standards to guide and assist local government administrators and is an essential resource for every local government administrator, particularly first-timers. ICMA assists members with ethical dilemmas and enforces the ICMA Code of Ethics. The program is an excellent resource for new administrators who face uncertain ethical situations.

ICMA Coaching Program

The program connects professionals at all levels looking for personalized mentoring with experienced executives and subject matter experts to share leading practices and new or different perspectives through direct 1-to-1 Coaching. Working with coaches dedicated to the development and advancement of professional local government management talent and those new to the profession, 1-to-1 Coaching encourages both formal and informal coaching relationships by providing development resources to build and enhance skills. These include guidebooks; the ICMA online matching service, CoachConnect™, with more than 200 coaches; six live webinars annually spotlighting leading practices on key topics from local government professionals throughout the United States; and more than 10 years of archived webinars.

ICMA University

The ICMA University is a professional development program available to all members of ICMA. In this program, ICMA members can self-assess their professional skills and knowledge, and design continuing education programs tailored to their unique needs. The

program takes advantage of resources offered by universities, institutes of government, state and regional organizations, national organizations (including ICMA), and other providers of training for local government managers.

ICMA's Voluntary Credentialing Program

The ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program is a means of defining and recognizing an individual ICMA member who is a professional local government manager qualified by a combination of education and experience, adherence to high standards of integrity, and an assessed commitment to lifelong learning and professional development. Managers are recognized by ICMA through a peer review credentialing process, and this self-directed program offers an opportunity for interested ICMA members to quantify the unique expertise they bring to their communities.

Members in Transition

When a member is fired, forced to resign, or otherwise involuntarily separated from local government service as a manager/administrator or senior staff member, ICMA provides an array of personal and financial support.

STATE ASSOCIATIONS

Most states have professional associations that provide assistance and resources to local government managers and administrators. State associations can provide a local support network for the first-time administrator, as well as offer educational and professional development opportunities.

ORGANIZATIONS

International City/County Management Association

777 North Capitol Street, NE, Suite 500, Washington, DC 20002

202-289-4262; icma.org

ICMA is the professional and educational organization representing appointed managers and administrators in local governments throughout the world.

Alliance for Innovation

502 E. Monroe Street, Suite C 124, Phoenix, AZ 85004

888-496-0944; transformgov.org

The Alliance for Innovation is an international network of progressive governments and partners committed to transforming local government by accelerating the development and dissemination of innovations.

American Society for Public Administration

1120 G Street, NW, Suite 700, Washington, DC, 20005

202-393-7878; aspanet.org

ASPA is the professional association of public administrators, representing over 10,000 practitioners, scholars, teachers, and students.

National Forum for Black Public Administrators

777 North Capitol Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002

202-408-9300; nfbpa.org

As the association of black public leadership, NFBPA's mission is to strengthen the capabilities of black public administrators and to promote the appointment of black Americans to executive positions in local government.

National League of Cities

660 North Capitol St NW #450, Washington, DC 20001;

202-626-3000; nlc.org

NLC is the country's largest and most representative organization serving municipal governments.

ABOUT ICMA

ICMA, the International City/County Management Association, advances professional local government through leadership, management, innovation, and ethics. ICMA provides member support; publications; data and information; peer and results-oriented assistance; and training and professional development to more than 12,000 city, town, and county experts and other individuals and organizations throughout the world. The management decisions made by ICMA's members affect millions of individuals living in thousands of communities, from small villages and towns to large metropolitan areas.



INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

777 N. Capitol St NE, Ste. 500, Washington, DC 20002

202.962.3680 | 202.962.3500 (f) | icma.org
