

# 2021 ICMA Local Government Research Fellowship

## Request for Applications

INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY  
MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION  
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The ICMA Local Government Research Fellowship program provides support for new or continuing research on key topics facing local government leaders and managers. For the current round of funding, ICMA is interested in supporting research focused on the following 2021 priorities of its executive board.

### Priority Topics

**Priority 1 – Transformation.** Following the compounding crises of 2020, the pace of challenge and change has reached an inflection point. Local government leaders, managers, and staff must continue meet the rapidly evolving challenges of today, while at the same time creating organizational ecosystems that are agile, creative, and forward-thinking environments for dealing with those beyond today’s line of sight. ICMA is interested in research that supports local government managers from across the globe in reimagining more resilient, equitable, and innovative workforces, services, economies, and communities. We have identified six themes and some preliminary topics (alone or in combination) for potential research fellowship applications and concept papers.

Transformation Themes	Preliminary topics
LEADERSHIP OF THE FUTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Effective crisis leadership for local government managers</li> <li>– Strategic planning and visioning for community recovery and reimagination</li> <li>– Preparing your organization and community for the next challenge</li> </ul>
OVERCOMING MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES WITH CREATIVITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Engaging elected officials in prioritization and strategic planning efforts</li> <li>– Financial management and budgeting in challenging financial times</li> <li>– Cybersecurity and continuity of operations</li> </ul>
INNOVATIONS IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICE DELIVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Alternative service delivery: shared services, public-private partnerships, and privatization/outsourcing</li> <li>– Using technology, data, and analytics to create smarter communities</li> <li>– The next generation of virtualization and e-government for citizen centric services, permitting, licensure, and more</li> </ul>
THE FUTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT WORK AND WORKFORCES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Alternative teleworking policies and programs for local government administration</li> <li>– Creating and fostering innovative and agile workforces to solve community problems</li> </ul>
ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY RECOVERY, LONG TERM RESTORATION, AND RESILIENCY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Post-disaster economic recovery and restoration</li> <li>– Redevelopment and reuse of previously used commercial, industrial, and governmental land and properties</li> <li>– Equitable redevelopment and restoration strategies</li> </ul>
REIMAGINING CIVIC INFRASTRUCTURE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Meeting the public where they are: post-pandemic innovations in civic engagement</li> <li>– Promoting civil discourse in community conversations</li> <li>– Rethinking public and vacant spaces</li> </ul>

**Priority 2 – Local Government Management of Policing and Law Enforcement.** Police reform is now a common refrain among community and local government stakeholders; however, the effectiveness of new strategies is not easily understood or to implement. ICMA is especially interested in research on how local government management of policing and law enforcement has evolved of the last 50 years; analysis of the most effective 21<sup>st</sup>

century strategies for local government management of police and public safety services within an international context; and the processes local governments have successfully used to engage community perspectives in productive conversations about potential reform.

### [Other Considerations](#)

The primary audiences for this research are local government executives, leaders, and managers. We are looking for action-oriented findings and recommendations to assist them and other local government leaders in navigating challenges and sustaining thriving communities. Leading and managing small towns and rural places is an often-overlooked focus of inquiry. ICMA is very interested in projects centered heavily or exclusively on the above issues in the context of villages, towns, boroughs, townships, and other small communities (i.e., under 25,000 in population). Additionally, there are tens of thousands of municipal-like governments worldwide, and COVID-19 has provided a fascinating case study in how different governments have responded to the same global threat. Wherever possible in the above topic areas, we are interested in research that illustrates transferable global innovations in local governance and policymaking. Likewise, we are looking for strategies to support local government leaders in applying an equity lens to improve internal processes, policymaking, and service delivery.

### [Fellowship Expectations](#)

- The primary deliverable is an original research report (or series of outputs) based on an appropriate methodology and written for local government managers. Applicants are welcome to propose other outputs such as video or audio content, tools, training curricula, data visualizations, or other formats.
- Fellows are also expected to contribute content for ICMA's external and internal communication channels. e.g., an article for *PM* Magazine, blog post(s) on their research, or a webinar.
- Participation as a speaker during ICMA's Annual Conference.
- Regular updates to ICMA Research and Development staff, and participation in interviews, phone calls, webinars, or other outreach on an ad hoc basis.

Fellows will be awarded a total stipend of \$15,000. Project teams are eligible to apply but will be treated as a single project.

### [Who Should Apply?](#)

Individuals working in local government, academia, or other sectors with expertise in local government management.

### [Application Requirements and Review Criteria](#)

To apply for a fellowship, please send us a concept paper (3 pages max) that describes your proposed research project. Your concept paper should include the following sections:

- Description of the proposed research question(s) that your work will seek to answer
- Background information on your proposed topic
- Discussion of the methodology that you will use to conduct your research including a basic timeline of activities (in general, fellowship deliverables should be completed within six months of award)
- Intended outputs and outcomes of your proposed research

In addition to the concept paper, each proposer is required to submit a CV (2 pages max).

Proposals and qualifications will be evaluated by a committee of ICMA staff and members. Each proposal will be scored on the following criteria:

- Relevancy of concept to priority topics and additional themes listed above (see “Other Considerations”);
- Utility of proposed outputs and outcomes to local government leaders; and
- Applicant’s command of the subject matter as it relates to local government professionals and demonstrated ability to complete deliverables.

Scoring may not be the only criteria used to select proposals. Respondents may be invited by ICMA to submit additional information to clarify portions of their original submission. Depending on the number of quality proposals, ICMA may also invite respondents to participate in brief conference call interviews before final selections are made for the Local Government Research Fellowship Program.

### Examples of Past Projects

Successful past outputs include:

- [Revitalizing First Suburbs: A Manager's Manual](#)
- [Governing for Equity: Implementing an Equity Lens in Local Government](#)
- [Leadership Before, During, and After a Crisis](#)
- [Beyond Compliance: Recruitment and Retention of Underrepresented Populations to Achieve Higher Positions in Local Government](#)

### Submission Instructions

- Submit your application to [research@icma.org](mailto:research@icma.org) with the subject line “Last Name, First Name LGRF Application” and two attachments, one for the concept paper (3 page limit) and one for your resume/CV (2 page limit).
- Attachments should be saved as either Word documents or as PDF files and titled “LastName\_FirstName\_LGRF\_Concept” and “Lastname\_Firstname\_LGRF\_Resume.” Please do not attach any additional information.
- Submissions due by **April 23, 2021, 5 PM EDT.**
- For more information or with questions, please contact Lindsay Jacques at [ljacques@icma.org](mailto:ljacques@icma.org) or Tad McGalliard at [tmcgalliard@icma.org](mailto:tmcgalliard@icma.org).