

Local Government Research Fellowship Program Frequently Asked Questions (updated July 9, 2018)

For clarification or additional questions, please contact:

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RESEARCH TOPICS AND METHODOLOGY

Are you more interested in the conceptual idea, the methodological approach, or both?

Both; we are interested in good ideas first and foremost, of which methodological approach is an important component. We may work with selected fellows to refine methodological approaches. In developing your proposal, it will be helpful to have considered potential challenges or alternatives.

Is there anything more to add about research priorities beyond the suggested list of topics?

The priority areas listed in the RFP span many of the topics important to ICMA and our members across all the organization's functions. From a research perspective, smart cities and technology issues are one area of particularly high interest and could intersect with other topic areas. However, we cannot assign priority to any topic in isolation as our hope is to award fellowships spanning diverse subjects and perspectives. We encourage researchers to propose topics based on where they see opportunities to advance the profession.

Can the project cover more than one topic?

Yes.

Would it be possible to collaborate/build on an existing ICMA research activity? Where can we go to find out more about previous ICMA research?

Proposals that suggest a new, novel approach to a topic ICMA has investigated in the past are welcome, as are proposals on topics where ICMA has done little to no research. Visit icma.org/research and icma.org/research-reports-and-publications to browse examples of research topics and outputs.

Is it possible to access existing ICMA survey datasets? What about Center for Performance Management data?

In most cases, access to survey data is possible, though some may have specific restrictions based on the funder or partner.

Center for Performance Management data is fairly outdated right now, so it would be historical. We do have a newer program, Open Access Benchmarking, that has yielded preliminary data from a small sample of communities across approximately 80 key performance indicators. It is possible that data could be accessed as well.

Is it possible to distribute a survey through ICMA? Does ICMA have a preferred survey platform?

Yes, but it would almost certainly need to be an electronic distribution as we cannot offset direct survey expenses such as postage, mailing, etc. ICMA's preferred online survey platform is Qualtrics.

Can a study be comparative?

Absolutely, these are valued by our members.

Can the research be a continuation of existing work, or must it be a new project?

Either is fine. If a continuation of existing work, we would hope that to the extent possible, the proposal clarify what new research/outputs/outcomes would be made possible through this next phase.

APPLICANTS

Is this intended to fund a specific category of researcher, e.g., students?

No. We welcome proposals from researchers of all types, and we don't have specific expectations for years of experience, degrees, positions held, etc. We'll be looking at how your qualifications demonstrate that you'll be successful in conducting the research proposed.

Do you have expectations for the amount of time or level of effort fellows should expect to commit?

Fellowships will be awarded for a one-year period, but this is not meant to occupy one's entire time. We don't have specific expectations other than what it takes you to develop a well thought out, practitioner-oriented research piece; this is not a specific LOE- or FTE-driven approach.

Are cross-institutional teams or other group projects eligible to apply?

Yes, though only one stipend would be awarded to the project.

Are private sector proposals or partnerships with the private sector eligible projects?

Yes.

Do I need to be an ICMA member to apply?

No.

FUNDING

Are there any restrictions on how funds can be distributed or used?

Working with ICMA's Finance and Contract Administration team in establishing agreements with fellows, our intention is to be as flexible as possible.

The awards can be made directly to individuals or through an employer. If an employer imposes an indirect cost, however, that would be deducted from the total stipend.

It will generally be up to the fellows' discretion how funds are used—some examples could include summer salary, a leave of absence, hiring research assistants, or other direct expenses. We will strongly encourage all fellows to reserve a portion of funds (\$5,000 suggested) for any travel expenses associated with the research, including attending the 2019 ICMA conference in Nashville, TN.

REVIEW PROCESS

What is the anticipated timing for review and decision-making?

We anticipate reviewing proposals as described in the RFP and making selections by September 1, 2018.