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Leadership Development for County Administrators, Managers, and Deputies

by Amanda Relyea, ICMA Director of Professional Development

What kinds of leadership skills do county administrators and managers need? Some answers are easy to articulate even if they are not always easy to carry out: You must be able to communicate the county's vision and values, effectively coach and empower your staff, and cultivate accountability.

Other answers are not as easy; this world is rapidly changing, which affects the role of the local government manager. In 2014, the ICMA Task Force on Leadership began to outline the necessary skills by first identifying the forces and challenges that will affect local government managers in the next 10-25 years, and second by identifying the leadership skills that you and the emerging leaders in your organization must possess to meet those challenges.

The forces and challenges that the Task Force identified include technological development and innovation, climate change and other environmental concerns, economic sustainability, social equity, varied and increasing public expectations, fragmentation of community, and political polarization. In addition to these, managers and administrators will continue to deal with emergencies such as terrorism, health epidemics and pandemics, and weather events.

To deal with these forces and challenges, county administrators and other local government managers and staff will need "exceptional team-building and interpersonal skills" like facilitation, negotiation, and "leading without being in control of all the moving pieces"; versatility and comfort with change; political astuteness without political alignment; partnership-building and other collaboration; intelligent risk-taking; and other soft skills. This is in addition to mastery of the hard skills like financial management, technological literacy, emergency preparation and management, and knowledge of other functional areas.

Great, so how do you learn and improve these skills?

Fortunately, many options are available to you and your staff, including leadership development programs, conferences, workshops, educational sessions and seminars, book study, magazine articles, online training, discussion groups, and more. These are offered by a variety of different organizations, including national and state professional associations and universities, among others. They range from complimentary to low cost to high cost, depending on sponsorship availability, promotion or marketing orientation versus skill-building orientation, length, and other factors. For example, ICMA alone offers seven leadership development programs for individuals ranging from emerging leaders to experienced executives. This is in addition to workshops and sessions at conferences, online learning programs, webinars, and magazine articles.

In response to the recommendations of the Leadership Task Force and in light of all of the available options, I am motivated to increase leadership development opportunities for my staff and myself and would challenge you to do the same. We must make the time for such development if we are to continue to respond well to current and future challenges.

As Bridgette Gransden, County Administrator of Midland County, Michigan, and member of the 2014 ICMA Leadership Task Force wrote to me, "Every day I am reminded that leadership is a journey. Whether it was in an association newsletter or from a respected colleague, I gather new tidbits to reflect on and tuck away. I can't imagine a point where I would be able to say, 'Well, I have learned all there is to know about leadership so mission complete.' It has become evident to me that, for both success and survival in local government, I need to keep developing my leadership skills. I believe successful leaders communicate well, have strong will, empathy, humility, and motivate others to be the same. The future of our profession lies within those working around us. The development of our management teams and staff should be just as critical as enhancing our own skills. The future of our profession depends on it." ■

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Peter B. Austin, County Administrator, McHenry County, Illinois

NACA President, Peter B. Austin

The summer months generally signal a more relaxed pace for most folks, but for NACA, this is our busiest period of the year. The association has been working diligently on membership outreach under the leadership of Scott Sorrel, NACA's Membership Committee Chair, and county administrator of Peoria County, Illinois. Together with ICMA's membership staff, a state by state strategy is in the works to engage NACA leadership in personal outreach to ICMA members in selected states who are not NACA members. We are also encouraging NACA members in selected states to join ICMA. NACA leaders have provided testimonials on the value they have derived from belonging to both associations.

High on the priority list is NACA's presence at the upcoming NACo Annual Conference, July 22-25, in Los Angeles County / Long Beach, California. In addition to our traditional Idea Exchange on July 24, NACA is a major contributor to three educational sessions on the program. The three sessions are Cyber Townhall Part II: Emerging Threats, Managing the Relationship between County Administrators and County Attorneys, and Expert Roundtable Discussion: Building Effective County-Tribal Relations. If your plans will take you to the NACo Conference, be sure to put these events on your schedule. Full details are on the NACA website. The NACA Executive Board will meet Saturday, July 23; all are welcome. Please submit your discussion topics for the NACA Idea Exchange to naca@icma.org by July 20. I hope to see many of you there.

NACA welcomed a new intern to support our initiatives earlier this year. Robert C. Donnan is a 2015 graduate of Temple University in Philadelphia, with a B.A. in Political Science. His studies focused on U.S. state and local government and civil rights development. Before returning to college, Robert spent a decade working in management roles for national and international retailers. Robert's work for NACA is supported by a generous grant from ICMA-RC, and his work will focus on membership development, communications, and social media.

An important note to members: The NACA bylaws call for election of regional vice-presidents at the annual meeting of the association in each even numbered year for a two-year term. (Article III. Section 2). We are fortunate that this year's nominating committee, chaired by Past President Robert Reece, has confirmed that each of our current Regional Vice Presidents is willing to serve another two-year term. The slate will be affirmed by the membership at the NACA annual meeting on July 24, in Los Angeles County / Long Beach. The nominating committee seeks to fill two At-Large Director vacancies on the board. These are in the northeast and the west coast regions. Expressions of interest should be directed to Robert Reece, County Administrator, Pottawatomie County, Kansas.

Next up? We will be gearing up for the 2016 ICMA Annual Conference in Kansas City, Missouri, from September 25-28. Watch for the monthly NACA News Update with details on county specific sessions and NACA events.

Peter B. Austin, NACA President
County Administrator, McHenry County, Illinois

NACA

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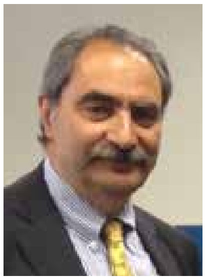
Inside

with Dr. Costis Toregas, The George Washington University

Mining Social Network Discussions: Leadership Tools for a New Age



Lack of resources, environmental challenges, cultural adaptation, and the impact of technological change on society all continue to expand the need for new management tools and skills of the public administrator. But the biggest change of all, in my mind, is the feeling of separation between the government and the governed – a feeling that no one is listening and that decisions are made in ways that do not reflect the opinions of the residents of a community. Perhaps this feeling has been there all along, but it is made more poignant by the dense communication patterns that all of us are experiencing in our private lives thanks to the social networking tools at our disposal; whether it is Facebook, Twitter or Linked In, each of us receive daily (or minute by minute!) updates on our friends, family members and what they are experiencing at the instant they post the message. And an expectation of immediacy creeps into our conscience, as we begin to anticipate similar, instantaneous reactions to our feelings from the government that is serving us. But is that realistic? Possible?

Many county offices today boast nice Facebook pages and other strong presences in social media. However, much of it is a one-way conversation, where the government posts and the residents are hopefully reading and learning from these posts. Yet, the technology has been advancing in leaps and bounds, and can now, with proper attention, give us insights not only on who is reading our postings, but what they are saying about us and the services we are managing on the social networking platforms our residents like to use. The numbers of such postings are high, of course, and the topics many. If we had some way to listen to this incessant stream of voices, and summarize what these voices say, we could anticipate problems, develop new insights into how our residents think, and also come up with solutions that conform to the wishes of the many …

But wait! Such tools exist today! They do require new skill sets from our staff, and a commitment to listen and respond in a timely fashion, but the opportunity to tap into the social networking voices is now within our reach with new technology tools. A recent article from PC Magazine titled "The Best Social Media Management & Analytics Tools of 2016" provides an analysis of computer-based (of course) tools that can help a manager track the feelings (positive and negative) of a group of clients (substitute residents here) as they communicate their feelings, frustrations and desires on the Internet to their friends, colleagues and yes, even their governments. Here is a brief segment from the article (the whole article can be found at http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2491376,00.asp):

> Competitive analysis will play a big role in your program so make sure that the tools you choose can perform here. It's also important that your tool has good listening ability, too—in other words, that it can pick up and deliver any mentions, conversations, hashtags, tweets, and other chatter about your company. Of the products covered in this review roundup, Crimson Hexagon, Hootsuite Pro, Sprout Social Premium, and Synthesio stand out as frontrunners in listening capabilities that include sentiment analysis. Of course, you need to know who is talking about you as well. These are the influencers who you will want to identify for customer engagement, the ones who will be key in propagating and spreading the good word about your business. We like Mention, Sprout Social Premium, Synthesio, and Talkwalker when it comes to flushing out influencers and their data.
>
> Team tracking, collaboration, and oversight are important as a business grows its social program. All of the tools reviewed, except Klear Advanced, support team activity such as response assignment and team member tracking. All of the products reviewed have geographic location, demographic, gender, and age stats as well, though the higher-end enterprise social analytics platforms such as Synthesio go beyond those basic demographics with deeper community analysis.

Once you get comfortable with the difference between private and public sector management terminology, the first major element that will strike you is that these new social media management tools have two faces: an outwardly facing one to explain and define a constituency's needs, and an inwardly-facing one to enable you and your team of managers to handle the response. And of course this maps perfectly to the two major mantras of today's management requirements:

1) Learn to listen to all voices, and
2) Use a team to develop effective responses to issues

In order to leave you with a good appreciation of what these tools can actually do, I give you a glimpse into a recently developed tool to track social networking inputs at global levels regarding environmental sustainability issues. Developed by the UN Environment Program (UNEP), it is called UnepLive and can be found here: http://uneplive.org/global/index#web_intelligence. Go ahead! Put in some words in the search box, and see the whole world come alive

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FROM YOUR NACO REPRESENTATIVE

by Eugene Smith, NACA Past President, County Manager, Dunn County, Wisconsin

I think that I complain a lot about not knowing what material to include that would be of interest to our membership regarding activity at NACo and its board of directors. Yet, something always seems to come up that, at least I think, is a general interest. This column is no exception.

I was notified that Cecilia Mills who has been our liaison with NACo since David Keen went on to greener pastures also chose to move on to a career advancement opportunity. Dr. Emilia Istrate, NACo Research Director, will be our new liaison. In the several years she has been with NACo she has taken a keen interest in interaction with NACA and has participated in any number of our meetings with NACo leadership.

Emilia joined NACo in February 2013 from the Brookings Institution, where she was a senior research associate and associate fellow with the Metropolitan Policy Program. Her research has been widely cited by the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Reuters, CNN, the Atlantic, the Economist and other media outlets. She is a frequent speaker to a variety of groups, national and international.

Emilia has a PhD in Public Policy from George Mason University with a specialization in regional economic development and transportation. She holds graduate degrees in international studies from the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) and the Diplomatic Academy of Vienna, Austria.

I think we are very lucky to have her assume this role, and placement of a member of the NACo management team in this capacity is illustrative of the value placed by NACo on the continuation and improvement of the relationship between NACo and NACA.

The NACo Board of Directors met at the Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. at the end of February and the actions of the Board have already been reported upon in the “County News”. The next meeting of the Board will be this month at the Western Interstate Regional Conference in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. I will not be able to attend and have not had the opportunity to review meeting materials. I am not aware of any particularly controversial topics and suspect much of the discussion will be about the upcoming presidential election. Next stop after the WIR is California in July and we hope to see many of our members there.

If there is something in particular you would like to see us bring forward to NACo as an Association, feel free to contact me or any of the officers of the Association. ■

NACA Events at 2016 NACo Annual Conference

July 22-25, 2016 - Long Beach Convention Center, Long Beach, California

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Cyber Townhall Part II: Emerging Threats	Friday, July 22	11:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m.	Regency Ballroom ABC Hyatt Regency
Executive Board Meeting	Saturday, July 23	9:00–11:00 a.m.	Shoreline B Hyatt Regency
Managing the Relationship between County Administrators and County Attorneys	Sunday, July 24	9:00–10:15 a.m.	Room 103 A Long Beach Convention Center
NACA General Membership and Idea Exchange	Sunday, July 24	12:00–3:00 p.m.	Shoreline A Hyatt Regency
No Host Dinner	Sunday, July 24	TBD	TBD
Past Presidents’ Breakfast	Monday, July 25	TBD	TBD
Expert Roundtable Discussion: Building Effective County-Tribal Relations	Monday, July 25	8:00–9:15 a.m.	Room 201 B Long Beach Convention Center

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Session Descriptions:

Cyber Townhall Part II: Emerging Threats

Friday, July 22, from 11:30 am-12:30 pm

Briefing and case study hosted by the National Association of County Administrators.

This panel will discuss trends in cyber threats facing county governments, specifically looking at the case study of Johnson County, Kansas, which experienced a recent cyber breach. Panelists will also discuss preventive measures, cybersecurity insurance, and other solutions.

- Stephen Goldsmith, Director of the Innovations in American Government Program, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University–moderator for the entire Tech Summit
- Hannes Zacharias, Vice President, National Association of County Administrators, County Manager, Johnson County, Kansas
- Steve Reneker, CIO, Riverside County, California
- Erin Dayton, Senior Program Specialist, Multi-State Information Sharing & Analysis Center (MS-ISAC), a DHS affiliate that offers cyber threat prevention and response for state, local, tribal and territorial governments.

Managing the Relationship between County Administrators and County Attorneys

Sunday, July 24, from 9:00 - 10:15 am

Being an elected official is not just about managing relationships with constituents, it's also about managing relationships with members of your own county government team. With two critical members of the team being the county manager and the county attorney, it is important to understand how to work with the two offices to achieve positive results. In partnership with the National Association of County Administrators (NACA), the National Association of County Civil Attorneys (NACCA), and the International Municipal Lawyers Association (IMLA), county attorneys and administrators will discuss how to maintain a cooperative relationship with county board members. Speakers:

- Mr. Peter Austin, President, National Association of County Administrators; County Administrator, McHenry County, Illinois
- Mr. Rick Moorefield, County Attorney, Cumberland County, North Carolina
- Mr. Kevin Leonard, Executive Director, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
- Mr. Thomas Montgomery, County Counsel, San Diego County, California

Managing the Relationship between County Administrators and County Attorneys

Sunday, July 24, from 9:00 - 10:15 am

For many counties, balancing and managing relations with intergovernmental partners includes not only state and city governments, but tribal governments as well. Regardless of level, all governments work to serve the public benefit. This session brings together county officials, tribal government leaders and Administration officials to discuss how county and tribal governments can develop relationships and work together towards common goals.

- Supervisor Diane Dillon, Napa County, California- moderator
- Supervisor David Rabbitt, Sonoma County, California
- Commissioner Lloyd Felipe, Cibola County, New Mexico
- Gary Shelton, County Administrator, Scott County, Minnesota
- Michael S. Black, Director, Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Denise Desiderio, Policy Director, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI)

Connect with NACA on Twitter and Facebook

Let us Share your Stories and Successes on Social Media

Has your community done something incredible? We would like to share your professional and counties' achievements on our social media platforms. Please, email photos, brief details, or links, or just tweet us @NACA_ICMA and we'll take it from there.

By Bob Schultze, President and CEO, ICMA-RC
and John Saeli, Vice President, Market Development and Government Affairs, ICMA-RC

Final Fiduciary Rule Adopted by Department of Labor
Congressional Tax Reform Efforts Continue
Final Obama Administration Initiatives

Final Fiduciary Rule Adopted by Department of Labor. The Department of Labor ("DOL") adopted a regulation ("rule") on April 6, 2016 that defines who is a fiduciary investment adviser and the responsibilities of entities and individuals who serve in that capacity. Firms that provide investment recommendations to ERISA plans, plan sponsors, fiduciaries, plan participants, beneficiaries and IRA owners will be considered an investment adviser and therefore a fiduciary to their customers. Broker-dealers who are currently held to a "suitability" standard may now be required to meet a higher fiduciary standard, which requires that recommendations be made solely in the interest of the customer. While ERISA generally does not apply to public retirement plans, some states incorporate ERISA provisions into their regulations on government retirement plans by reference and provisions of the fiduciary rule related to IRAs apply to all rollovers from retirement plans, including those from government retirement plans.

Although investment recommendations in ERISA plans and IRAs almost universally give rise to fiduciary status, some communications from providers will not be deemed fiduciary investment advice under the rule. Education about retirement savings and general financial and investment information may not rise to the level of being recommendations and, therefore, may not constitute advice. General communications that a reasonable person would not view as an investment recommendation also would not be considered to be advice. Finally, service providers (such as record keepers or third-party administrators) making a "platform" available to plan fiduciaries who in turn choose the specific investment alternatives made available to individual participants would not be to be deemed fiduciaries. Compliance with the new requirements will be required in April 2017, with a phased implementation of certain provisions to January 1, 2018.

In a related development, the most recent Securities and Exchange Commission ("SEC") regulatory agenda released this M ay targets the release of a proposed uniform standard of care for providing personalized investment advice about securities to retail customers for April 2017. While noteworthy, the SEC's action on the fiduciary rule has long been delayed and targeted dates in the agenda have frequently been missed.

Congressional Tax Reform Efforts. While overshadowed by the presidential primaries, congressional work on tax reform continues. Ongoing work by the tax-writing committees in Congress is geared toward potential major tax legislation by Congress during the next administration. At a high level, the effort is geared toward lowering tax rates, while at the same time eliminating tax deductions and preferences. During discussions over the past six years, a number of proposals have been made that would affect public retirement plans, including consolidation of Sections 401(a), 401(k), 457(b) and 403(b) of the tax code, capping of annual retirement contributions at 20% of salary or $20,000 (whichever is lower), and mandated participation in Social Security by new public sector employees.

House Speaker Paul Ryan (R-WI) established several task forces that are receiving input from Members of Congress on selected broad agenda items. The Tax Reform Task Force has been particularly active with its leader, Ways and Means Committee Chairman Kevin Brady (R-TX), scheduling weekly meetings. In addition, a Ways and Means Subcommittee is holding hearings to supplement those efforts.

On the Senate side, Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch (R-UT) continues to focus on a draft proposal implementing "corporate integration" to eliminate the double taxation of corporate income. Chairman Hatch notes that corporate integration could "significantly reduce effective corporate tax rates without all the difficult and highly politicized tradeoffs that will accompany a reduction in the statutory corporate tax rate." As the approach taken on corporate integration could have a substantial impact on retirement plans and IRAs, this activity is being closely watched by the retirement savings community.

Retirement Provisions in President Obama's Fiscal Year 2017 Budget. President Obama's Fiscal Year 2017 (FY17) Budget includes a number of provisions that may affect retirement plans. While approval of the President's

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budget by Congress is unlikely, several provisions of potential importance to the public sector could be incorporated into either unrelated spending bills or future tax reform legislation. Highlights of retirement provisions in the President's budget proposal include:

- **Ceiling on Retirement Plan Contributions/Accruals.** Generally prohibits additional retirement plan contributions/accruals in years in which an individual's aggregate IRA and employer-based defined contribution plan (e.g., 401(k), 403(b), and governmental 457(b) plans) account balances and defined benefit plan accruals exceed a fixed level. The cap would be based on the actuarial present value at which an individual could purchase an annuity, with an annual payment equal to the current maximum benefit permitted under a defined benefit plan (currently $210,000 per year). For a participant age 62, as an example, the current threshold would be approximately $3.4 million. The cap would be lower for younger participants and, if interest rates rise, the cap could be significantly reduced for participants.
- **Limits to Tax Rate and Preferences Use to Reduce Tax Liability.** Limits to 28 percent the tax rate at which upper-income taxpayers can claim itemized deductions and other preferences to reduce tax liability. This limit would apply to pre-tax employee contributions to IRAs and retirement plans (including 457(b) plans), as well as interest on tax-exempt bonds and employer-sponsored health insurance.
- **Elimination of Required Minimum Distributions on Low Balance Accounts.** Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) rules for individuals age 70½ and above would be eliminated for those whose aggregate balance across tax qualified plans and accounts (including Roth IRAs) are $100,000 or less. The budget also proposes that RMD rules apply to Roth IRA accounts during the lifetime of the owner — reversing current law, which requires RMDs for Roth IRAs generally only after the owner's death. Additionally, individuals would no longer be permitted to make additional contributions to Roth IRAs after they reach age 70½.
- **Required Disbursement of Assets to Non-spouse, Non-dependent Beneficiaries.** Non-spouse, non-dependent beneficiaries of deceased IRA and retirement plan participants would be required to receive the proceeds of plan assets within five years of the death of the participant/owner. Under current law, payments can be "stretched" over the beneficiary's life expectancy.
- **Enhanced Annuity Portability.** Retirement plan participants would be allowed to take a "lifetime income investment" distribution eliminated by the plan without regard to any withdrawal restrictions under the plan.
- **Enhanced W-2 Reporting to Defined Contribution Participants.** W-2 reporting would be modified to include employer contributions to defined contribution plans in order to: 1) provide workers with a better understanding of their overall retirement savings and compensation, and 2) facilitate compliance with the annual contribution limits.
- **Limitations on Roth Conversions to Pre-tax Dollars.** Highly compensated individuals who are already ineligible to contribute directly to a Roth IRA would no longer be able to accomplish this indirectly by contributing to a traditional IRA and immediately converting to a Roth IRA. This would also affect savers with after-tax non-Roth contributions to plans and traditional IRAs.
- **Promotion of State-established Savings Plans.** Many states have been considering legislation to create state-mandated savings programs for *private*-sector employees whose employers do not voluntarily offer a retirement plan. The President's budget calls for funding to help states adopt "pilot" programs.

Final Obama DOL Regulatory Agenda Released. The DOL released its Spring 2016 regulatory agenda, which describes its priorities for the remainder of the administration. While DOL regulations usually do not directly affect public plans, they often are followed in the public sector as a matter of best practice. The agenda targets September 2016 for release of a final rule regarding state-run auto IRA programs. Because this project is important to the White House, the DOL is likely to prioritize finishing this project before the end of the Administration.

Other DOL activity of potential interest to the public sector will likely be deferred to the next Administration. The DOL's long-delayed project to issue rules regarding pension benefit statements – which may include a requirement for participant statements to contain a "lifetime income disclosure" – was moved from a target release of November 2016 to now being listed as "Next Action Undetermined." The DOL continues to list a number of other items as "Next Action Undetermined," including a fee disclosure guide, guidance on brokerage windows, additional target date fund disclosure and changes to the annuity safe harbor. ■

HR 4724: Social Services Block Grant

Editorial by Bob McEvoy, Managing Editor

Congratulations to Matt Chase for his statesmanlike letter to the House Ways and Means Committee Leaders regarding HR 4724. This bill would eliminate the Social Services Block Grant, SSBG, which I am very familiar with having been a county manager for 22 years.

As you know, we are living in tragic times where some at the federal level propose the elimination of tax funded programs to save taxpayers money, however the opposite is true. More dramatic than not saving money, this proposed elimination is clearly abandoning our vulnerable and in-danger population of at-risk children (over 10 million) and larger amounts of the vulnerable elderly. As Matt indicates, the SSBG "aim(s) to prevent and remedy abuse, neglect, and exploitation."

Many of us are aware of the deaths and horrible suffering of the children who we did not know of and this would become the norm following the forced reduction of the brave and compassionate Child Protective professionals, as the Federal program is eliminated. Similar results would occur for the Adult Protective program.

From a cost effectiveness point of view, the institutionalization of those who are currently served at home, is a stark example of eliminating a cost effective program in favor of a more costly approach. NY Times Op Ed Columnist Nickolas Kristoff recently wrote: "We rescued the banks because they were too big to fail. Now let's help children who are too small to fail." ■

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES NACo

March 16, 2016

The Honorable Kevin Brady
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sander M. Levin
Committee on Ways and Means
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Brady and Ranking Member Levin,

The National Association of Counties (NACo), which represents all of America's 3,069 counties, strongly opposes the elimination of the Social Services Block Grant (SSBG) under H.R. 4724.

Many counties depend on SSBG to serve vulnerable children and adults within their communities, including those in ten of our nation's most populous states, where SSBG is directly passed through to counties. SSBG can be used for nearly 30 different types of services, but the most common use is for adult protective services (APS), according to a recent NACo-National Association of County Human Services Administrators survey. In fact, it is currently the only federal program authorized for APS besides the unfunded Elder Justice Act (enacted as part of the Affordable Care Act), and there is no alternative state or county APS funding stream sufficient to replace the loss of SSBG.

Child protective services are the second most common use of SSBG funds. In FY 2009, the last year for which data is available, SSBG served 22 million individuals nationwide, 47 percent of whom were children. Services provided to these vulnerable populations – children and seniors – aim to prevent and remedy abuse, neglect and exploitation.

Accordingly, we are deeply concerned that the loss of SSBG funds would lead to the elimination or sharp reduction of services, followed by staff reductions and the otherwise avoidable institutionalization of individuals who are currently receiving in-home services.

We hope you will take these factors into consideration and we thank you for considering our views. NACo's Associate Legislative Director Hadi Sedigh is available to provide additional information and can be reached at 202.942.4213 or hsedigh@naco.org.

Sincerely,

Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director, NACo

Counties Join Forces for Improved Performance

ICMA invites NACA members to learn more about an ICMA Insights County Consortium by joining ICMA staff at the NACo conference July 22-25 in booth 639 and at the NACA Idea Exchange. The consortium was formed by county managers/administrators and staff who wanted to better track the performance of county services and benchmark with peer jurisdictions.

To launch the consortium, ICMA is working with 17 ICMA Insights participants that provide county services. Together, representatives from these and other jurisdictions identified and defined performance measures that are particularly important to counties. Because they have agreed on the measures and definitions, they will be able to make apples-to-apples comparisons with their peers.

Starting in July, for example, the consortium will launch 50 new

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State Initiatives to Cover Uncovered Private Sector Workers

By Elizabeth K. Kellar, President and CEO, Center for State and Local Government Excellence

INTRODUCTION: *Considering the continuing congressional preemption debates and rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court since our founding, it seems to me that we now have sufficient expository experience and perhaps enhanced intergovernmental negotiating skills to move bravely forward to foster and pursue heretofore avoided public policy vis-a-vis business explorations. Such attempts to correct, when requested, seriously negative private sector outcomes which the public sector could help remedy, seems meritorious. Helping small businesses without pension availability is a good example of this and SLGE President Beth Kellar's report is presented below for your reading and consideration.*

— Bob McEvoy, Managing Editor, Journal of County Administration

While state and local government employees typically have access to an employer-sponsored retirement plan, only about half of private sector workers are covered by such plans. There is growing evidence that many households, especially those with lower incomes, will have to rely exclusively on Social Security in retirement.

Some states have taken the initiative to address this retirement savings gap by pressing for legislative solutions that establish an employer mandate to auto-enroll employees into an IRA or have adopted a marketplace approach to encourage employers to make it easier for employees to save.

Authors Alicia H. Munnell, Anek Belbase, and Geoffrey Sanzenbacher describe the underlying problem, the efforts that states have made to date, and what the U.S. Department of Labor has done to remove regulatory barriers.

They found that:

- California, Oregon, Illinois, and Connecticut have enacted auto-IRA legislation;
- Washington and New Jersey have adopted a marketplace approach to promote low-cost retirement plans to small employers;
- Eleven states are actively pursuing legislation; and
- Seven states were unsuccessful in passing legislation.

The authors conclude that states have taken action because the lack of retirement savings is a significant problem that the federal government has not been able to address. They argue that "a national plan would be a much more efficient way to close the coverage gap, offering substantial economies of scale and avoiding the laborious, time-consuming, and expensive process of setting up 50 different plans."

As the workforce is expected to be even more mobile in the future, the challenge of saving for retirement will only grow.

The Center for State and Local Government Excellence gratefully acknowledges the financial support from ICMA-RC to undertake this research project.

The entire issue brief can be found here: http://slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/State-Initiatives-Brief-12-page.pdf ■

("Counties Join Forces" from page 8)

county-oriented measures, such as:

- Tax assessment: Percentage of total assessment upheld on appeal
- Job training: Percentage earning more than 50% of median income 12 months after completing training
- Jail medical expenditures per prisoner night
- Specialty court diversion/drug treatment programs: Percentage of participants who reoffend
- Health: Percentage of food-borne illness cases investigated within 24 hours.

Other jurisdictions are welcome to join at any time, whether counties, consolidated city/county governments, or others that offer similar services.

ICMA Insights already includes numerous measures in housing and youth services, plus other neighborhood and internal services such as fire/EMS, police/sheriff, road maintenance, parks and recreation, human resources, information technology, and fleet management – more than 950 metrics in all.

Participants may decide for themselves how many metrics they wish to utilize, and can also add custom measures specific to their own jurisdictions. They may report data annually, semi-annually, quarterly, monthly, or even weekly, with options available for direct data upload.

At the NACo conference, ICMA staff will demonstrate the features of the Insights software at the exhibit booth and discuss the new consortium. If you can't make it to NACo, you can learn more about the County Consortium in this post in the Performance Management & Analytics blog. And to learn more about ICMA Insights, please request an online demo or contact performanceanalytics@icma.org. ■

Public Plans Data: Providing the Facts to Tell Your Pension Plan's Story

By Amber Snowden, Communications & Project Manager, Center for State and Local Government Excellence, asnowden@slge.org

INTRODUCTION: *We at the Journal of County Administration have had the great honor of presenting the outstanding work of the Center for State and Local Government Excellence. In this issue, the Center's Amber Snowden, writing for our county managers and administrators, brings us her insight, below, regarding the Public Plans Data project and its great value to the nation's counties.*

– Bob McEvoy, Managing Editor, Journal of County Administration

Public pensions have been a hot topic in the media and among state and local policymakers. News coverage often focuses only on those pension plans that are in dire straits. But what are the facts? And how does the funded status of your county's pension plan compare with others? A new resource makes it easy to get the hard facts on public pensions to inform policy debates. Public Plans Data (PPD) is a free, publicly accessible database of financial, actuarial, and other plan data for 150 of the nation's largest local and state public pension plans.

What is Public Plans Data?

PPD (at www.publicplansdata.org) was developed in 2007 as a partnership between the Center for State and Local Government Excellence and the Center for Retirement Research at Boston College. It was recently expanded to include the National Association of State Retirement Administrators. The newly enhanced database contains plan-level data from 2001 to 2013 for 150 public pension plans, including 115 plans that are administered at the state level and 35 that are administered locally (new local plans are being added each year). PPD's sample covers 90 percent of state and local government public pension membership and assets nationwide. The database is updated at least once a year, using data from the most recent comprehensive annual financial reports (CAFRs) and actuarial valuations (AVs).

Key Features

The PPD includes comprehensive retirement plan data on employee and employer contributions, benefits, assumptions, investment income, plan membership, and other variables. Further enhancements to the database were added in 2015, including features like Quick Facts, Popular Charts, and the Interactive Data Browser.

How Can County Administrators use Public Plans Data?

- Click on the ***State-by-State-Map*** for a comprehensive look at any state's pension plan and pension cost data;
- Use the ***Quick Facts*** to compare your county's retirement plan to national data;
- Use the ***Interactive Data Browser*** to select variables to examine and produce a wide range of customized tables;
- Use the ***Popular Charts*** feature to generate and embed charts in your presentations or websites;
- Download comprehensive annual financial reports (CAFR's) and actuarial valuations for every plan in the database;
- Find a glossary of key terms and concepts on the site. ■

("Technology Corner" from page 3)

in front of you – who is posting what messages about your topic of interest, how the postings relate to one another, where they are coming from …

Technology of course will not provide solutions. However, the new tools of social media stream management can begin to truly help us listen to the needs of our residents in a low-cost, timely fashion, and take the vital first step towards good management practice that calls for a good bout of listening before making plans to act! ■

ICMA Annual Conference: NACA Events and Member-Led Session

When: September 25-28, 2016

Where: Kansas City Convention Center/Kansas City, Missouri

Register for the 2016 ICMA Annual Conference here.

Include these NACA Events in your ICMA Conference schedule.

EVENT	DATE	TIME	LOCATION
Executive Board Meeting	Sunday, September 25	8:30-11:00 a.m.	TBD
NACA General Membership and Idea Exchange	Sunday, September 25	12:45-2:45 p.m.	TBD

Educational Session: How Counties Promote Regional Economic Development

Monday, September 26 from 12:45 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Highlighting new ways of thinking about economic development, this session will show how a regional approach can result in new infrastructure to support broadband deployment or improved transportation.

It will also present steps for initiating and facilitating processes to create economic development for all.

Session Leader: Robert Reece, County Administrator, County of Pottawatomie, Manhattan, KS

Panelists: Mary Lou Brown, Chief Administrative Officer, County of Jackson, Kansas City, Missouri; Michael Cowden, Community Outreach Manager, International Council of Shopping Centers, Washington, DC; and Kenneth Terrinoni, County Administrator, County of Boone, Belvidere, Illinois. ■

2016 NACo Achievement Awards: Congratulations to ICMA and NACA Members

Since 1970, the annual Achievement Awards Program, a non-competitive awards program run by the National Association of Counties (NACo) has recognized innovative county government initiatives in 21 different categories. More than 110 counties and organizations won awards in 2016 with 16 counties winning Best in Category Awards. More than half of these Best in Category Awards went to counties with ICMA and NACA members. Congratulations to the following counties and ICMA and NACA members for their organizations' achievements:

County of Alameda, California
Best in Category: Children & Youth - SafetyNet Program

County of Clackamas, Oregon
Best in Category: Criminal Justice and Public Safety - A Safe Place Family Justice Center: Wrap Around Services for Domestic Violence Victims

County of Henrico, Virginia
Best in Category: Civic Education and Public Information - Home Maintenance Workshops

Best in Category: Personnel Management - Employee Training & Benefits, Fire Fit: An Intensive Focus on Firefighter Wellness

County of Kitsap, Washington
Best in Category: Risk Management - Risk Check

County of Leon, Florida
Best in Category: Planning - DesignWorks

County of Los Angeles, California
Best in Category: Court Administration and Management - Audio Remote Interpreting (ARI) Assistance at Public Counters

Best in Category: Health - Improving Care for Incarcerated Patients

County of Maricopa, Arizona
Best in Category: County Administration Management - Citizen Consultancy Program

Best in Category: Libraries - Airport Library Lounge

County of Miami-Dade, Florida
Best in Category: Parks and Recreation - Bike305

County of Montgomery, Maryland
Best in Category: Transportation - Creation of Wiki Database for Bus Stop Inventory/ADA Compliance

County of Washoe, Nevada
Best in Category: Human Services - Crossroads Program

Congratulations to the 110-plus award-winning counties and ICMA and NACA members for your achievements. Your leadership contributes to the quality of life in the communities you manage. See all the 2016 NACo Achievement Awards recipients.

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