



**IGMA**

**BUILDING A  
DIVERSE  
PROFESSION AND  
ORGANIZATION**

**A Special Supplement to PM**

# Introduction

BY KAREN PINKOS, ICMA-CM, ICMA PRESIDENT

**A**s the ICMA Executive Board continues to be engaged in implementing our strategic plan, “Envision ICMA,” one of the strategic initiatives that has been a key issue over this past year is expanding and diversifying the membership. We’ve been looking at how to give a stronger representative voice to the diversity in our membership while remaining a world-class organization of local government leaders. Just as our world is evolving, so is our profession and the ICMA organization, which amplifies our desire to include new and different voices. To that end, the Executive Board continues to focus on improving diversity, equity, and inclusion of membership across the association, particularly in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, and age.



The Executive Board has initiated a conversation about more effectively engaging our members across the career spectrum in the work and benefits of the association. To help make this happen, we launched an engagement process at the beginning of this year to hear from members and explore options for bringing more inclusion to the ICMA Executive Board and our membership. The Board has proposed several ideas with respect to membership and voting privileges in ICMA that would require member approval to amend the ICMA Constitution. In addition, our members have suggested many other ideas for improving diversity, equity, and inclusion, while maintaining the organizational focus to support leaders in local government.

Many of you have participated in this process and I've heard a lot of candid feedback, and I'm grateful for that. Sometimes we must have these difficult, uncomfortable conversations to move forward. We need to be fair, we need to be true to our Code of Ethics, and we need to ensure that our organizations and our communities

allow everyone to feel valued, heard, and a part of the team.

I also acknowledge, along with the Board, that much progress has been made in recent years. The work ICMA is doing in promoting women, people of color, and underrepresented groups began well before I became ICMA president. But we still have further to go. We are certainly not alone as

an industry when it comes to the need to improve our gender balance and minority representation, yet I see it as a huge opportunity. Our local government profession can be a leader across all sectors in raising the ranks of women, people of color, and underrepresented groups in executive management. We know local government is the best place to work, and

we can show the world that it's because we welcome anyone and everyone to be successful.

If you can see it, you can be it. And we are beginning to see it. I'm excited to keep the momentum going. Thank you to everyone who has participated in this conversation so far, and I look forward to seeing you in Nashville.



Karen Pinkos highlighted Equity and Inclusion in her speech at the 2018 ICMA Annual Conference.



# ICMA'S MEMBER ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

**T**o meet the Board's goal of broadly engaging members in exploring options for bringing more inclusion to the ICMA Executive Board and our membership, ICMA worked with a firm that specializes in qualitative and quantitative research. More than 2,000 comments have been gathered, including ideas for better communication and beefing up "pipeline" and educational programs. In addition, ideas for expanding member voting privileges and service on the ICMA Executive Board were tested.

The questions posed to members were developed and refined through an iterative process which began in February using an online platform. The national focus group allowed over 300 participants to rapidly and continuously vote on options and provide comments which informed successive questions in the process. From the results of the initial focus group, a discussion guide with workbooks and supporting resources were developed for board members to present at the ICMA regional conferences and the state association meetings that have taken place throughout the spring and summer.

These focus groups were aimed at gathering feedback on member perceptions, priorities, and areas of consensus, which would pave the way for change and provide clear direction to the Board as it develops ballot measures to change the ICMA constitution for consideration by the membership.

## PARTICIPATION

The participation of ICMA membership has been impressive. To date we have gathered feedback from 224 participants online (National Online Focus Group, March 4, 2019) and 766 participants in person at regional conferences and state association meetings (67 alone from the ICMA Southeast Regional Conference, February 28, 2019).

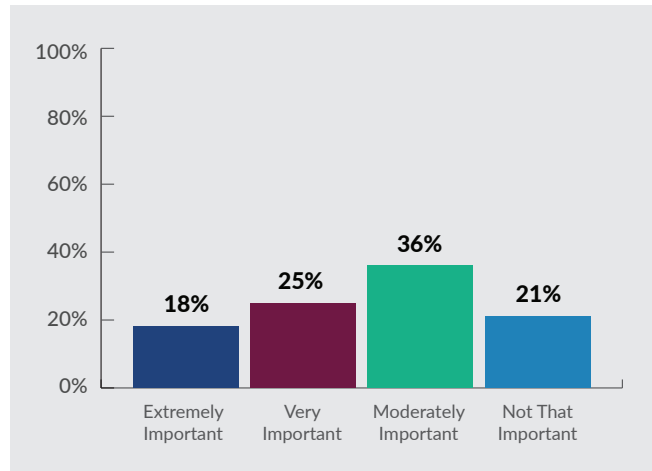
- 990 survey respondents total\*
- 64% Voting Members
- 18% Non-Voting Members
- 15% Not a member
- 3% Don't Know

*\* Additional data from August meetings will be included in final report.*

## WHAT WE LEARNED

There is consistent support to change voting and nominating rights in service of diversity, which is generally defined as diversity of career experience and professional points of view from diverse colleagues.

### Q2. How important is it to you to change voting, nominating rights, and Board service eligibility to create more diverse participation and governance at ICMA?



To be a voting member of ICMA, ICMA involvement is important, but secondary to career experience.

#### What members are saying....

"I think allowing affiliate members who have at least 3 years of experience to vote allows a broader perspective. Though they may not be CM's or ACM's they can provide valuable insight."

"The ICMA Board serves as the visible leadership of our organization. This Board has to be more diverse. The best way to accomplish this goal is to open the voting opportunities to more members."

"ICMA is the City/County Management Association, not department head association."

"Provide transparency to the process, lessens 'insider' status."

#### Qualifications Matter

Participants are open to a range of qualifications, but more prefer more experience than less.

Participants expected voters and individuals serving on regional nominating committees, as well as the Board, to have 5 years of experience in service to local government and membership in ICMA.

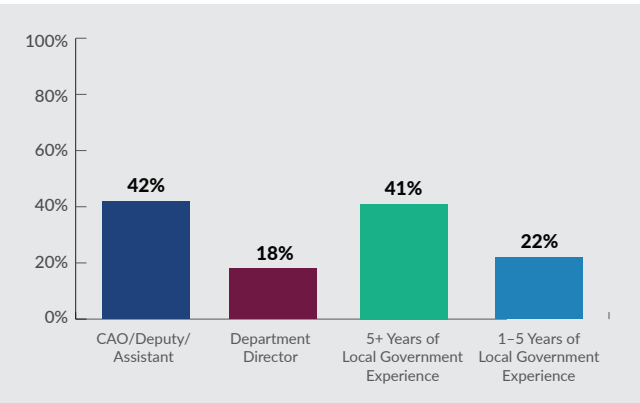
#### Voting Rights Alternatives

Of the four options tested, extending voting eligibility to affiliate members with requisite local government service and ICMA membership received the most support. Options for making no change and extending voting eligibility to any member in service to local government received the least support.

#### Representatives to the Regional Nominating Committee

Most participants felt that any ICMA member serving in a local government and in good standing with 5 years of local government experience could serve as the appointed representative to the Regional Nominating Committee.

### Q10. Use the Career Experience below to mark what you think is necessary to serve on the ICMA Regional Nominating Committee (mark the minimum qualification). Career Experience:



#### What members are saying....

"Sometimes it seems or appears there is an 'insider' bias to the selection of regional nomination committees."

"We need more opinions and voices other than full members. Grooming ICMA members for greater responsibility means involving them in the process and opportunities sooner. Exposure can spark a desire to do more!"

"More people available to serve brings more voices. More inclusive, more participation."

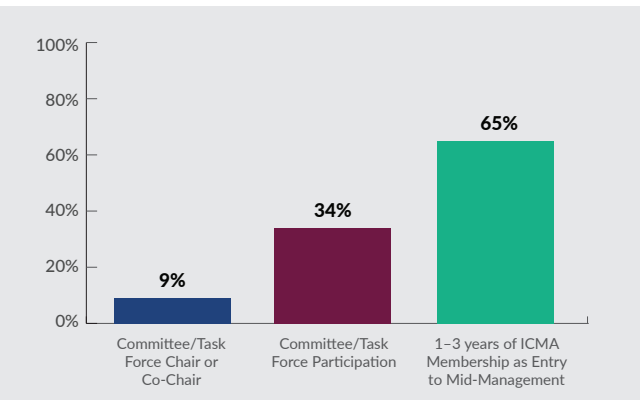
"This allows for leadership development and to give opportunities to other members."

"This is the City/County Management Association—you truly do not understand the accountability of this position until you sit in that chair."

#### Executive Board Diversity

Most participants believe that affiliate members should have representation on the ICMA Executive Board, which would bring more diversity to the Board. So the two options discussed that expanded eligibility to serve on the Board to affiliate members were preferred by participants.

### Q11. Use the ICMA Experience below to mark what you think is necessary to serve on the ICMA Regional Nominating Committee (mark the minimum qualification). ICMA Experience:





*ICMA President Karen Pinkos leads the Executive Board in a discussion of Board diversity, February 8, 2019, in Long Beach, California*

An option that allowed the incoming president to make board appointments based on diversity was least favored, along with making no change to board eligibility.

**What members are saying...**

“Include members at all levels to get different perspectives. Change is necessary or ICMA would not be looking at the issue.”

“I like the idea of building in and dedicating diversity over time. It is time for a change and to make progress in this area. It is long overdue.”

“Diversity selection by a president is transparent to the membership & can be dealt with if anything inappropriate occurs. I believe CAOs and deputies should be primarily responsible for growing the organization.”

“I do not think the president should have authority to appoint board members—Board members should be elected.”

## WHAT'S NEXT?

Given the comprehensive input gathered, the Executive Board will use the information to propose changes to the ICMA constitution that will increase diversity of the membership and the board and maintain the central role in the association of the CAO and the leadership pipeline positions. In looking at the membership demographics, these changes will make a difference.

But there is so much more.

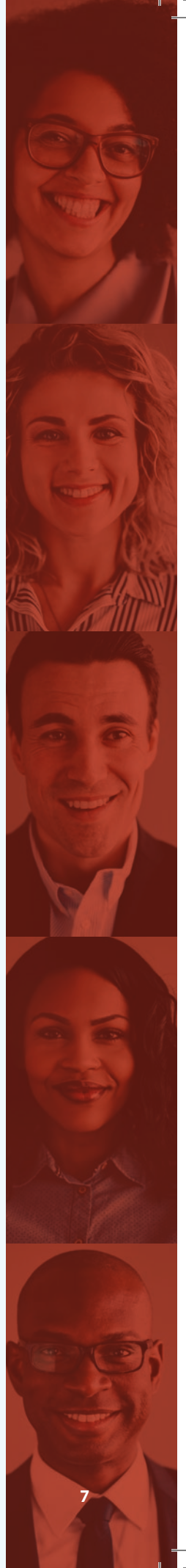
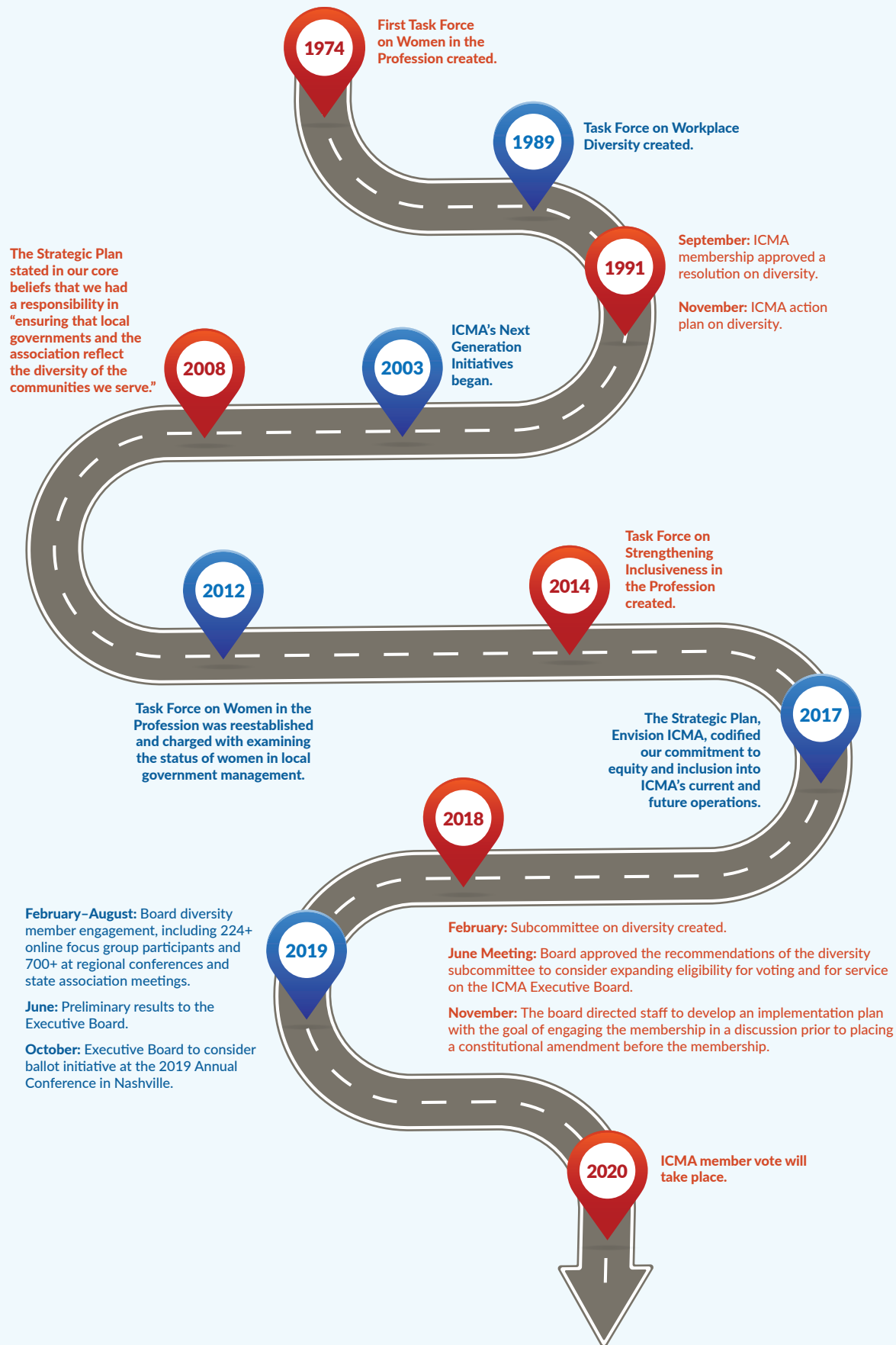
For more than 40 years, ICMA's leadership has brought attention to the issue of diversity and inclusion.

Our members have shared best practices at work in their communities and ICMA affiliates have been strong partners in this journey. And based on the feedback from the discussions over the past few months, the desire to focus on being a more welcoming profession and organization has never been stronger.

Look for additional opportunities to engage at the 2019 ICMA Annual Conference in Nashville.

Share your comments within the ICMAConnect Group: Building a Diverse Profession and Association. ICMAConnect is an online community just for ICMA members where you can connect, network, and discuss issues via a safe, closed platform. Meet us there at [icmaconnect.org](http://icmaconnect.org).

# THE PATH TO Building a Diverse & Inclusive Profession



# ICMA EQUITY & INCLUSION AT A GLANCE

## #sheleadsgov

Celebrating stories of women who have made a difference in local government

## Coaching

Working with LGHN, NFBPA, and the League of Women in Government to recruit coaches and increase engagement with women and underrepresented groups

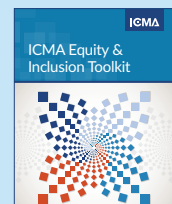
# 48%

of coaches on CoachConnect are women

## At the 2019 Annual Conference:

- ICMA University + The League of Women in Government symposium
- Luncheon for women in the local government profession
- Equity mixer
- Equity & Inclusion theme track

## Resources



## 6 Episode Podcast series

on women in local government

## Board diversity

- 5 Regional and 1 national interactive discussions
- Driven by the strategic plan initiative to expand and diversify the ICMA membership

## Code of Ethics Tenet 4

Revised to include Equity & Inclusion

## Students

Student chapter members receive complimentary memberships with LGHN and NFBPA

# 1,600+

students in 98 Chapters, including 3 International

## Partnerships & Agreements

