

An ICMA Affiliate | WomenLeadingGovernment.com
Founded 2006



STARTING A
WLG Chapter
Toolkit



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STARTING A WLG CHAPTER

“To help women succeed in public service by enhancing career-building models that develop leadership skills and by networking professional women in government.”

Women fill leadership roles in all arenas of government. A group of California leaders in government who share a strong desire to continue to grow talent and encourage women to excel has come together to form **Women Leading Government**.

Women Leading Government (WLG) is an initiative started in November 2006 by a group of women managers in California. Formation of WLG was supported by the Cal-ICMA Preparing the Next Generation Committee and by ICMA. Organized by women managers of California’s cities, counties, and special districts, WLG is designed to assist women managers in their career development. WLG welcomes all people dedicated to public service and the development of women leaders. In 2011, WLG approved an affiliation agreement with ICMA to strengthen mutual efforts in support of women in the profession. This agreement outlines the ties and collaborative relationship between WLG and ICMA. WLG is an affiliate of ICMA, having been created as part of Cal-ICMA. WLG’s goals are in alignment with ICMA’s and both organizations will seek even more opportunities to work together to foster professional management in local government.

EXISTING WLG CHAPTERS

CALIFORNIA *(Founding Chapter)*



Carol Jacobs

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ARIZONA



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DELAWARE



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Florida is starting a Women Leading Government Group, its mission is: *"To promote women in local government and related professional capacities for purposes of progress and gender equality."* In the near future look for leadership summits and roundtables and other events to connect women around the State. If you are interested please contact anyone of the Board members listed below.

Jill Silverboard

Assistant City Manager, City of Clearwater
jill.silverboard@myclearwater.com

Beth Rawlins

FCCMA Corporate Liaison
beth@bethrawlins.com

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Pamela Brangaccio

City Manager, City of New Smyrna Beach
pbrangaccio@cityofnsb.com



If you are interested in Ohio and want to join the Women Leading Government Movement contact:

Stacy Schweikhart

Community Information Manager
City of Kettering, Ohio
3600 Shroyer Road
Kettering, OH 45429

Phone: (937) 296-2415

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If you are in South Carolina and want to join the Women Leading Government Movement contact:

Ashley Jacobs

Executive Director for the Greater Lake City
Community Development Office
Lake City, SC

glccdo@gmail.com



The Texas Women Leading Government is starting its efforts in Corpus Christi, Texas. For more information on upcoming events contact:

Julie Robinson

City Administrator
City of Dickinson, TX
(281) 337-6204

jrobinson@ci.dickinson.tx.us

Purpose/Mission of Women Leading Government – Texas:

- Empowering women and expanding each member's network of professional women.
- Building bridges between professional and personal objectives
- Empowering women to succeed in public service, through mentoring and professional development

View **WLG Organizational Chart for the State of Texas**

For more information on upcoming events contact:



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North Texas



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South Texas



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SAMPLE NEW MEMBER LETTER

“I find it even more inspiring to network with colleagues who seek to support one another and broaden the diversity in all public agencies.”

Dear Ms. Smith:

I am delighted to welcome you to Women Leading Government. On behalf of the entire Women Leading Government Board, thank you for your membership.

Women Leading Government was conceived in 2006 by several active women members of the Cal-ICMA Preparing the Next Generation Work Group. These women recognized that the unique professional development and networking needs of women leaders in local government were not being fully met through the various existing local government associations. So, with a focus on the unique skills and challenges that women bring to and face in the profession, Women Leading Government is delivering high-quality, distinctive and impactful events that have been very well attended and thoroughly enjoyed by attendees over the past few years.

For the coming year, Women Leading Government will continue to offer our members professional development and networking opportunities. We will continue to sponsor sessions at other local government conferences to highlight women in leadership positions. We will also continue to host luncheons and networking events. We sponsor coaching for newer local government professionals and networking calls for seasoned chief executives.

A strong, committed membership is key to every successful organization. As a young organization it is even more critical to our success, and the entire Women Leading Government Board, look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

NOSHING AND NETWORKING

“Each WLG event offers networking opportunities and information from great women leaders that I would not encounter otherwise in my day to day work.”

EASY GUIDELINES FOR WOMEN LEADING GOVERNMENT NETWORKING AND NOSHING EVENTS

What is a Networking and Noshing Event?

Networking and Noshing events are informal, no program luncheons. These create an easy way to meet new colleagues, connect friends, and strength relationships within local government.

How many people do you need?

It can be anywhere from a half dozen women to 20 or more. It doesn't really matter! The point is to get together.

How to invite people?

Invite your friends through email. Send information to Carol Jacobs at treasurer@womenleadinggovernment.com who will send out an announcement to the entire WLG membership.

What do you need to do?

- Pick a restaurant that will give separate checks and can accommodate up to about 20 or people. Can be at separate tables and not one long table. The point is to have informal conversations.
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- Write up an announcement, explaining that it is an informal, no program luncheon and that everyone will pay at lunch.
- Send emails out to people you think would be interested.
- Follow up with a couple of other email reminders.
- Ask for an RSVP about 3-4 days before the lunch date, so you can call the restaurant and tell them how many people will be there.
- We typically have the lunch from 12 - 1:15 or so.
- Show up by 11:45 to greet people.
- Take information about WLG membership.
- Take some of the WLG giveaways.
- Have fun!



WLG ROUNDTABLE PLANNING GUIDE

“For me, there is a direct link between my success as a public administrator and WLG.”

PLANNING GUIDELINES

- **Define the Event**

Know the purpose of the Roundtable, and think of it from the angle of everyone involved; speakers, participants, and planners. Select a topic that would appeal to a wide audience.

- **Select a Date and Location**

Consider previous requests to host or help with events when selecting a location. Know the minimum and maximum numbers of participants that the venue can hold.

- **Identify and Secure Speakers/Panelists**

Utilize our talented WLG members as speakers for WLG events as much as possible. Work with the Board to identify good speakers appropriate for the topic, and try to use different speakers than those featured at recent WLG events.

- **Identify an Event Lead**

This person ideally is located close to the venue and is able to coordinate the details that are involved in event planning.

- **Food and Beverage**

Our experience shows that buffets work best, and vegetarian options are always requested by participants. Most caterers require that we enter into a contract, which protects WLG as well as the caterer. Only the WLG chair has the authority to sign a contract where WLG is a party. Provide a copy of the caterer's estimate and contract to the WLG Chair and the Treasurer so the contract can be signed, and arrangements can be made to pay the caterer the required deposit. Make a note of the date that the caterer will need the final count. This will help to determine an RSVP deadline. Also know the date that the caterer will need the final payment.

- **Pricing**

The Board set a policy a number of years ago where all WLG events must cover their own costs. Determine all expenditures that will be needed to put the event on including food and beverages (plus tax, delivery, and gratuity), room rental, keynote speaker fees, credit card fees, audio visual equipment rental, parking costs, handouts, decorations (if needed), signage, speaker gifts, etc. to determine an approximate per person cost. Speakers do not need to pay a registration fee for the event where they are speaking, so factor in their costs

as well to determine the per person cost. Pricing is tricky as our goals are to encourage participation, provide the participants with a high quality experience, and cover all of our event costs. Create a pricing structure where WLG members pay less than non-WLG members.

- **Advertising**

Once the date, location, topic, pricing, and speakers have been confirmed, the advertising component can begin. WLG uses a standard flyer for events to create brand recognition. Work with the Board to finalize the flyer. The Treasurer will set up an online RSVP and payment mechanism and will help get the word out to the WLG membership.

- **RSVPs**

The Treasurer will track RSVPs and keep the event lead informed on numbers to allow time to provide headcounts for the caterer. The Treasurer will also keep the event lead informed in case there is so little interest, there may be a desire to postpone or cancel the event.

- **Speakers and Panels**

WLG tries to avoid paying speakers, but if a paid speaker is desired, obtain Board approval first, as we need to

enter into a contract with any paid speaker. Only the WLG Chair has the authority to sign a contract where WLG is a party. Do not enter into any contract with a speaker before obtaining Board approval. Make sure you understand all speaker's requirements in advance of receiving the contract, such as fees and audio visual requirements. Provide a copy of the contract to the WLG Chair and the Treasurer so the contract can be signed, and arrangements can be made to pay the speaker's fees.

For speakers who volunteer their services, verify that they will bring everything needed for their presentation, or arrange to have those items available on the day of the event. This includes handouts, power point presentations, flip charts, etc.

Always make sure that speakers understand our audience and understand what information we want them to convey.

For events where a panel will be utilized, hold a conference call well in advance of the event with the moderator and the speakers to get everyone to interact with each other, finalize the content of the presentation, and work out any details in advance. Make sure that any speaker needs are handled, such as handouts, power point presentations, questions for the panel, etc.

- **The Program**

A Roundtable event is typically from 11:30 to 1:30 with this as a guide for the agenda:

11:30 – Check in, participants get table assignments (optional but encouraged), networking time

11:50 – Chair or host City official welcomes the group. Chair introduces WLG Board members, plugs WLG and upcoming events, and thanks those who helped with the event. Lunch is served – make sure that speakers eat first!

12:15 – Moderator begins the program

1:15 – Moderator ends the program and facilitates questions

1:30 – Chair thanks the panelists, presents them with a gift, and thanks participants for coming.

The bulk of the time should be devoted to the subject matter. If you wish to have discussion at the tables, be sure to build in that time along with any needed materials in to your agenda.

- **Assigned Seats**

Our experience shows that people will typically sit with coworkers or people that they already know at WLG events. To encourage discussion and networking,

consider assigning seats to attendees. It is also nice if WLG Board members are seated at different tables. If seating is assigned, participants can get their table assignment at check in.

- **Signage**

Arrange to have some signage to direct participants to the parking area and the event venue.

- **Nametags**

Make sure that you have someone that can create a nametag for each participant. Bring extras to the event in case one needs to be redone.

- **Check In**

A check-in table is needed to facilitate participant's arrivals and to have a place for handouts or WLG brochures. It is helpful to have at least 2 people work check-in, depending upon the size of the event, and if parking needs to be validated. Typically, the Treasurer will want to be part of check-in, especially if fees need to be collected from participants or if contact information will be collected.

- **Speaker Gifts**

WLG will provide volunteer speakers with a small gift to thank them for their time and support of WLG. Please contact the Chair or the Treasurer to make sure that speaker gifts are provided.

- **Items for the Tables**

If you plan to have any individual table discussion, make sure you place any materials to help facilitate the discussion on the tables. If participants are asked to write questions for the panel, make sure that there are pens and 3x5 cards available on the tables for their use. Contact the Treasurer in advance of the event to obtain WLG brochures for distribution at the event, and make arrangements with the ICMA Liaison to have ICMA literature available.

- **Goodies/Takeaways for Participants**

These items are not required, but if the host agency would like to provide giveaways such as pens or post-it notes, they may do so. If there are handouts for participants to take with them, make sure there are enough for all attendees.

- **Expenses**

Any expenses that need to be made for the event should have the prior approval of the event lead. Original receipts are needed for reimbursement.

- **Feedback**

It is always good to find out what participants thought of the Roundtable. WLG has a Survey Monkey account which may be used to get feedback after the event.





WLG EXECUTIVE CONFERENCE CALLS

Serving as a WLG board member offered me a beneficial and enjoyable networking experience, as well as valuable professional support for my career.

Hello Ladies,

You are getting this email as because you are the chief executive, head honcho, boss, leader, guru, top of the heap, city manager, chief executive officer, county manager, in your organization. The purpose of these monthly calls, is to have an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas that affect us all. The calls are on the second Thursday of the month from 9 am to 10 am. We keep it to one hour to respect your very busy schedules. The calls are facilitated by either Jan Perkins or Linda Barton who are both former City Managers and great facilitators. If you would not like to participate, please let me know and I will remove you from the list.

Past Topics:

City or County Manager/City Attorney or County Counsel relationships – what do you do when you are not getting the service you think you need and/or getting more service than you need.

Orienting new councilmembers (would be a good one for October, to help them get ready for just after the election)

How city managers/county managers track and manage all the things they have on their plates and the many issues

they have to manage (what techniques do they use?
Systems they employ?)

Community engagement – be careful what you wish for – how to manage beyond the cranks, engaging people who don't have the time to be involved, but want to be informed and might be able to give you their opinion, but won't come to meetings

How are city managers/county managers directly connecting with the community and organization – what techniques are they using to make those direct connections (and not having everything filtered through staff)

Budget cuts, perception vs. reality. How do we deal with severe cutbacks in city departments and how to deal with the perception of having been reduced when it really hasn't happened – vs the reality of severe cutbacks in other departments.

Defining success in the new reality of local government. How do we define success today? We used to target project and initiatives - what other things we can use to measure success which is not development related?

How to make service sharing with other agencies work well.

How to deal with an elected official to makes inappropriate remarks to staff.

How to get your junior staff in front of your elected officials in making presentations without scaring them off.

Creating norms of behavior for your governing body.

Managing the world of social media, why, how and when to get involved.

Managing the world of social media, why, how and when to get involved.

Energy projects/savings including street light purchase

Organizational/productivity studies/consultants vs. in-house

Best practices in hiring the right employees

To contract or not that is the question.

Working out partnerships with your neighboring jurisdictions when your elected officials don't like the idea

How to coach councilmembers who can't work with the mayor

Your own performance evaluation (tips you've learned or want to hear about)

COACHING CALL GUIDELINES

“WLG provides new opportunities for a diverse group of women committed to public sector management to network, mentor and connect.”

COACHING PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Coaching Volunteer - Thank you for agreeing to be a coach for Women Leading Government. Our mission is “To help women succeed in public service by enhancing career-building models that develop leadership skills by networking professional women.”

One of the many ways the WLG works to develop skills is through our monthly coaching program. The coaching program is a monthly 1-hour call-in conference call hosted by an executive coach. The coach is typically a Chief Executive Officer/City Manager or an Assistant City Manager. The participants can be at any level of their organization that are WLG members and interested in their own professional development.

The Coach's Responsibilities

- Work with the WLG Coaching Call Coordinator to develop a topic of interest for the group.
- Once the topic is developed, it is suggested that the coach provide a brief reading assignment, scenario, book or other materials that may assist in the topic discussion. Provide this information to the group 1-2 weeks before the scheduled call-in date.

- Prepare a list of questions in advance that will stimulate the conversation.
- On the call-in date, you will facilitate the call. Make sure you get everyone's name and place of employment, once everyone is on the call (often participants do not RSVP).
- Engage and lead the group conversation for the hour.
- It's as easy as that!
- This program is not a success without you! Thank you so much for agreeing to be a coach for Women Leading Government!



COACHING CALL TOPICS

“It is a very exciting time for women working in government organizations.”

EXAMPLES OF WLG COACHING CALL TOPICS

1. Understanding the role and collaboration of the City Manager and Assistant City Manager. Or advancing to the role of CM or Asst CM.
2. How to ask for constructive feedback that will really help you to change and improve.
3. Tough issues we are faced with. Possibly revolve around planning, economic development, innovation and customer service internally, sustainability, HR, Purchasing.
4. How women’s leadership capabilities are influencing the public sector.
5. Effective communication (written and verbal).
6. Networking and building allies in an organization. Team building.
7. How to overcome resistance from staff.
8. Understanding the political arena and tools to maintain a balanced, collaborative relationship.
9. How to be influential without being characterized as overbearing.
10. Strategies and tools for working with a difficult boss.
11. Staying motivated and/or motivating your staff.

Council goal setting and how to get your Council to discuss goals.

How to get your junior staff in front of your elected officials in making presentations without scaring them off.

Managing the world of social media, why, how and when to get involved.





INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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Goal of WLG

- Provide a source of networking for women from varied backgrounds
- The opportunity to discuss similar issues and concerns across jobs
- Opportunities for training and sharing of information
- Another tool for development of mentors
- The encouragement of growth in the profession

