

An ICMA Affiliate | WomenLeadingGovernment.com
Founded 2006

WLG

Women Leading
Government



STARTING A
WLG State 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 came together to form **Women Leading Government (WLG)**. Now, **WLG State Chapters** are forming all over the country!

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 the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Organized by women managers of 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. As an affiliate of 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.

CONNECT WITH ICMA

As part of the affiliation agreement with WLG, ICMA will create and manage a webpage for your State Chapter. They will also create an official logo for you to use on any event materials or communications.

If you have several colleagues in your state that would like to form an official state chapter, simply notify either of the following ICMA staff members with a notice of your intent to start a State Chapter and the contact information for the person or persons who will be taking a leadership role in the Chapter (no formal board structure is necessary to start):

Christa Rainwater
Program Manager
crainwater@icma.org

Robert C. Donnan
Assistant Program Manager
rdonnan@icma.org

Once the webpage is up and running, simply send updates, schedules, event information, images, or any other materials you would like to share on the webpage, and the same ICMA staff will take care of it for you.

It's that simple!

EXAMPLE STATE CHAPTER LOGO



SEE EXAMPLES OF WLG STATE CHAPTER WEBPAGES

icma.org/wlg/state-chapters-directory

GET INTO SOCIAL MEDIA

Feel free to start social media accounts for your State Chapter to more easily communicate with fellow members. You are encouraged to use the official logo provided by ICMA as your profile picture.

SEE EXAMPLES OF WLG ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Twitter: @CO_WLG

@ArizonaWLG

Facebook: @DEWLG

@SouthTexasWLG

CURRENT WLG CHAPTERS

For advice on developing a new or current WLG State Chapter, you can seek advice from these current Chapter leaders:

ARIZONA

Nicole M. Lance

Deputy City Manager
City of Surprise

www.surpriseaz.gov

CALIFORNIA (*Founding Chapter*)

Lori Sassoon

Deputy City Manager
City of Rancho Cucamonga

president@womenleadinggovernment.com

COLORADO

Kelly Houghteling

Communications/
Assistant to the Town Manager
Town of Windsor

khoughteling@windsorgov.com

DELAWARE

Terry Tieman, ICMA-CM

Town Manager
Fenwick Island

townmgr@fenwickisland.org

Ann Marie Townshend, AICP

City Manager
City of Lewes

atownshend@ci.lewes.de.us

FLORIDA

Jill Silverboard

Deputy City Manager
City of Clearwater

Jill.silverboard@myclearwater.com

MASSACHUSETTS

Denise Baker

Senior Member Services Coordinator
Massachusetts Municipal Association

dbaker@mma.org

MISSOURI

Jessica Heslin

Assistant to the City Administrator
City of Wentzville

Jessica.Heslin@wentzvillemo.org

Andrea Muskopf, MPA

Assistant to the City Manager
City of Clayton

amuskopf@claytonmo.gov

OHIO

Stacy Schweikhart

Community Information Manager
City of Kettering

stacy.schweikhart@ketteringoh.org

SOUTH CAROLINA

Ashley Jacobs

Exe. Director for the Greater Lake City
Community Development Office Lake City

ajacobs@aikencountysc.gov

TEXAS

Central Texas

Katherine Woerner Caffrey

Assistant City Manager
City of Cedar Park

Katherine.caffrey@cedarparktexas.gov

Gulf Coast, Texas

Julie Robinson

City Administrator
City of Dickinson

jrobinson@ci.dickinson.tx.us

North Texas

Julie Couch

Town Manager
Town of Fairview

jcouch@fairviewtexas.org

South Texas

Arlene Medrano

Budget Administrator
City of Corpus Christi

arlenem@cctexas.com

GET FORMAL: ESTABLISHING BYLAWS

Bylaws of

Women Leading Government

(INSERT YOUR STATE HERE) Chapter

When starting a new chapter, or once your new chapter gets going, consider establishing formal bylaws to give your organization some structure and guidelines. The Delaware Women Leading Government State Chapter has a notable example of bylaws with the following articles:

ARTICLE I – Mission Statement

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

ARTICLE II – Membership

ARTICLE III – Membership Rights

ARTICLE IV – Membership Meetings and

ARTICLE V – Officers

ARTICLE VI – Committees

ARTICLE VII – Miscellaneous

Access the full Delaware Women Leading Government State Chapter bylaws for reference and adapt them for your own state and your own needs: www.icma.org/wlg/Delaware.

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 (WLG). On behalf of the entire WLG community, thank you for your membership.

WLG 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, WLG 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, WLG 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. I, and the entire WLG community, look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events.

NOSHING AND NETWORKING GUIDELINES

“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 WLG 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 strengthen 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. Designate someone to take RSVPs. Notify the president of your group, 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 more people. It can be at separate tables and not one long table. The point is to have informal conversations.

- 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 email reminders.
- Ask for an RSVP about a week before the lunch date, so you can call the restaurant and tell them how many people will be there.
- Typically, schedule the lunch from 12 p.m.–1:15 p.m. or so.
- Show up by 11:45 a.m. to greet people.
- Take information about WLG membership.
- Take some WLG giveaways (swag).
- Have fun!



WLG ROUNDTABLE PLANNING GUIDE

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

- **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 or chapter leaders 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 is ideally located close to the venue and is able to coordinate the details that are involved in event planning.

- **Food and Beverage**

Experience shows that buffets work best, and vegetarian options are always requested by participants. Most caterers require that you enter into a contract, which protects WLG as well as the caterer. Only the WLG Chair (Chapter leader) 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 (if your Chapter has these positions) 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**

Many WLG Boards set a policy 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 your 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 or leadership to finalize the flyer. The Treasurer (or other Chapter leader) will set up an online RSVP and payment mechanism and will help get the word out to the WLG membership.

- **RSVPs**

The Treasurer (or other Chapter leader) will track RSVPs and keep the event lead informed on numbers to allow time to provide headcounts for the caterer. The Treasurer (or other Chapter leader) 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 or leadership approval first, as you need to enter into a contract with any paid speaker. Only the WLG Chair (Chapter leader) 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 (if your Chapter has these positions) 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 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. 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**

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 or leaders 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 participants' 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 (if your Chapter has this position) 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 (if your Chapter has these positions) 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. Use a survey site like Survey Monkey which may be used to get feedback after the event. You can also have feedback forms available on the tables.

WLG CONFERENCE PLANNING GUIDE

Once your State Chapter has grown, it may be time for a WLG Conference!

PLANNING GUIDELINES

- **Define the Event**

Know the purpose of the Conference and think of it from the angle of everyone involved: speakers, participants, and planners. Select a theme to define topics that would appeal to a wide audience.

- **Select Dates and Location**

The Conference should span at least 2 days. Always host the Conference in a hotel. 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 or chapter leaders to identify good speakers appropriate for the topic and try to use different speakers than those featured at recent WLG events. Have a Keynote Speaker for each day of the event.

- **Identify an Event Lead**

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

- **Food and Beverage**

Experience shows that buffets work best, and vegetarian options are always requested by participants. Most caterers require that you enter into a contract, which protects WLG as well as the caterer. Only the WLG Chair (Chapter leader) 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 (if your Chapter has these positions) 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.

- **Lodgings**

To accommodate attendees at an affordable rate, work with the hotel at which the event is being held to set a special rate for attendees. If you are expecting more attendees than the venue can accommodate, or you would like to provide a more affordable option for attendees, work with nearby hotels for special rates. Typically, the hotels will provide you with a link to provide to attendees, so they can book their lodgings at the special rate.

- **Pricing**

Many WLG Boards set a policy 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 your 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 or leadership to finalize the flyer. The Treasurer (or other Chapter leader) will set up an online RSVP and payment mechanism and will help get the word out to the WLG membership.

- **Registration**

The Treasurer (or other Chapter leader) will track registrations and keep the event lead informed on numbers to allow time to provide headcounts for the caterer. The Treasurer (or other Chapter leader) 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 or leadership approval first, as you need to enter into a contract with any paid speaker. Only the WLG Chair (Chapter leader) 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 (if your Chapter has these positions) 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 Conference event is typically from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with this as a guide for the agenda:

Day 1:

8:00 a.m.	Registration and Networking
9:00 a.m.	Welcome
9:30 a.m.	Opening Keynote Session
10:55 a.m.	<i>Networking Break</i>
11:15 a.m.	Concurrent Workshops
12:30 a.m.	Keynote Luncheon
1:45 p.m.	<i>Networking Break</i>
2:00 p.m.	Concurrent Workshops
3:00 p.m.	<i>Networking Break</i>
3:15 p.m.	Concurrent Workshops
4:30 p.m.	Wrap-Up and Announcements
5:15 p.m.	Networking Happy Hour

Day 2:

7:30 a.m.	Check-In, Continental Networking Breakfast
8:30 a.m.	Welcome
8:40 a.m.	Keynote Session
9:30 a.m.	Panel Discussion
10:45 a.m.	<i>Networking Break</i>
11:00 a.m.	Closing Keynote Session
12:30 p.m.	Conference Conclusion

- **Signage**

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

Have signage set up in the lobby of the venue to welcome attendees and direct them to the registration area.

Have signage made for each event that can be placed outside the rooms. The signs should include: WLG logo/Conference logo, name of the event, time of the event, Keynote Speaker's name and, if possible, image.

- **Name Badges**

Make sure that you have someone that can create name badges for each participant. Preprinting and alphabetizing preregistered attendees name badges will save time. Having name badges on lanyards is ideal for a multiday event.

- **Check-In**

A check-in table is needed to facilitate participants' 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 (if your Chapter has this position) 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 (if your Chapter has these positions) to make sure that speaker gifts are provided. This is an especially important gesture for Keynote Speakers.

- **Items for the Tables**

If you plan to have any individual table discussions, 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 (or other Chapter leader) 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 Conference and each event. Use a survey site like Survey Monkey which may be used to get feedback after the event. You can also have feedback forms available on the tables. It is ideal to get feedback on individual events as soon as possible.





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.”

Monthly conference calls are a fantastic way to keep in touch while accommodating your busy schedules. The purpose of these monthly calls is to have an opportunity to share thoughts and ideas that affect us all. Pick a day and time for conference calls and try to keep it regular (e.g. the first Friday of each month at 3 p.m.). Try to keep it to one hour to respect everyone’s very busy schedules. The calls should be facilitated by a select member or members. Consider scheduling an occasional 10-15-minute call to discuss emergent issues.

Sample 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/county managers track and manage all the things they have on their plates and the many issues they must manage (What techniques do they use/systems do 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/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/county departments? 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 projects and initiatives – what other things we can use to measure success that is not development related?
 - How to make service sharing with other agencies work well.
 - How to deal with an elected official who makes inappropriate remarks to staff.
 - How to get your junior staff in front of your elected officials 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.
 - Energy projects/savings including street light purchase.
 - Organizational/productivity studies/consultants vs. in-house experts.
 - Best practices in hiring the right employees: contract or no contract?
 - 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

One of the many ways 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 city/county manager or an assistant city/county manager. The participants can be WLG members at any level of their organization, who are 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 (oftentimes, participants do not RSVP).

- Engage and lead the group conversation for the hour.
- It's as easy as that!

EXAMPLES OF WLG COACHING CALL TOPICS

- Understanding the role and collaboration of the City/County Manager and Assistant City/County Manager. Or advancing to the role of the CM or Assistant CM.
- How to ask for constructive feedback that will really help you to change and improve.
- Tough issues we are faced with. Possibly revolve around planning, economic development, innovation and customer service internally, sustainability, HR, purchasing, etc.
- How women's leadership capabilities are influencing the public sector.
- Effective communication (written and verbal).
- Team building: networking and building allies in an organization.
- How to overcome resistance from staff.
- Understanding the political arena and tools to maintain a balanced, collaborative relationship.
- How to be influential without being characterized as overbearing.
- Strategies and tools for working with a difficult boss.
- 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.
- Salary negotiation.



MEDIA KIT

Access all the WLG logos and related images to begin building your State Chapter

Branding is important when building your State Chapter. You can find WLG logos and related images to use at www.icma.org/wlg-media-kit.

If you need help designing and creating images for your WLG events or materials, contact the following ICMA staff members and they will assist you in getting it done:

Christa Rainwater
Program Manager
crainwater@icma.org

Robert C. Donnan
Assistant Program Manager
rdonnan@icma.org

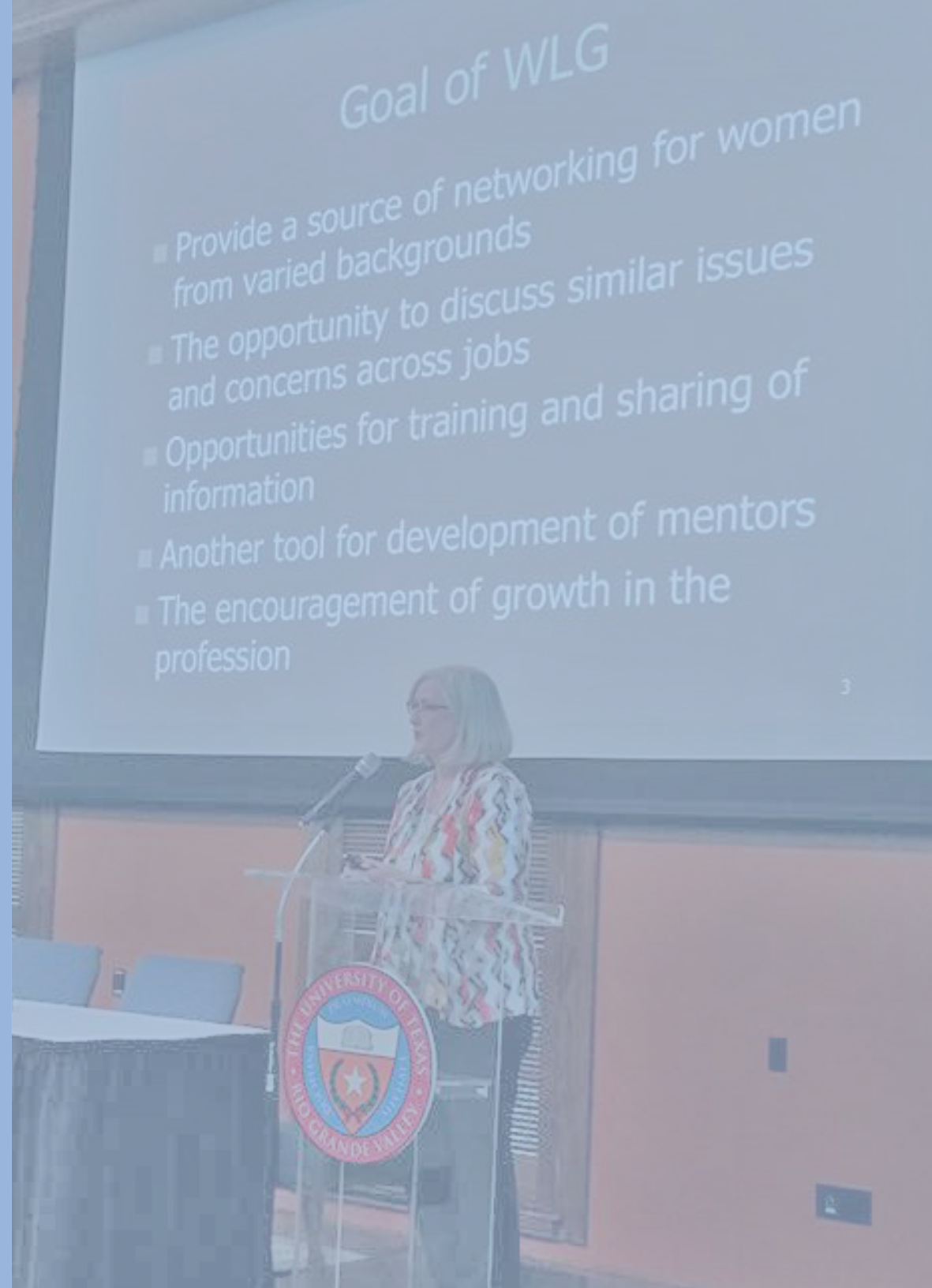




INTERNATIONAL CITY/COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

777 N. Capitol St NE, Ste. 500, Washington, DC 20002

202.962.3680 | 202.962.3500 (f) | icma.org



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