

# Exploring “Next Generation” Partnerships

## A Summit of Executive Recruiters and State Association Leaders

ICMA Annual Conference  
Minneapolis/Hennepin County, Minnesota  
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Hosted by  
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West Coast Region Vice-President, ICMA



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## Summit participants included representatives from:

### **Executive Recruiting Firms**

- Arcus Public
- Bennett Yarger Associates
- Brimeyer Group
- CPS Executive Search
- The Mercer Group, Inc.
- Peckham & McKenney
- Springsted
- The PAR Group
- Waldron & Company
- Waters-Oldani Executive Recruitment

### **State Associations**

- Arizona City/County Management Association
- Cal-ICMA
- Florida City/County Management Association
- Illinois City Management Association
- Iowa City/County Management Association
- Missouri City Management Association
- New Hampshire Municipal Management Association
- New Jersey Municipal Management Association
- New York State City/County Management Association
- Association of Pennsylvania Municipal Management
- Texas City Management Association
- Vermont ICMA
- Virginia Local Management Association
- Washington City/County Management Association

# Exploring “Next Generation” Partnerships: A Summit of Executive Recruiters and State Association Leaders

At this year’s ICMA Conference in Minneapolis, 20 Executive Recruiters joined 24 State Association Leaders in exploring “Next Generation” issues and opportunities to develop collaborative programs at the state and national levels.

## Leadership Competencies

In welcoming participants to the summit, ICMA Executive Director Bob O’Neill indicated that ICMA had responded to the concern raised at the Executive Recruiter’s Summit last year in San Diego that young professionals needed to develop an array of leadership competencies. To develop leadership competencies, ICMA University had developed a self-directed Emerging Leaders Development Program as well as Leadership ICMA, a two-year intensive learning program culminating in a consulting project by the class of 15-20 emerging leaders.

## Summit I Conclusions

At the Summit held in San Diego (dubbed Summit I), Executive Recruiters concluded:

- 1) Local governments face a **talent shortage** as 80 million Baby Boomers (born between 1946-1964) retire in the United States economy with only 50 million Gen X’ers (born 1965-1976) to replace them. Research studies indicate that there is a greater proportion of Baby Boomers in the public sector than in the private sector.
- 2) A **value shift** exacerbates the demographic crisis. For instance, aspiring managers from Gen X are committed to career but are far more likely to insist on balancing personal and family commitments with career.

- 3) Because of the talent shortage, managers are making **career choices based on the reputations of City Councils** and other governing boards. Since talented managers are in greater demand, they can pick and chose opportunities and avoid “toxic” political cultures.
- 4) In response to the diminishing pool of talent, governing boards of **local governments are now more open to non-traditional candidates** (e.g., women, people of color) for chief executive positions.

### ICMA’s “Next Generation” Initiative

#### *Research About the “Next Generation” Challenge*

“What Can Be Done? Attracting Young People To Careers In Local Government Management” (2002), a research study documented that young people fail to consider local government careers because they don’t know anything about the field. Go to [www.icma.org/pm/8501](http://www.icma.org/pm/8501).

*Building the Next Generation of Leaders in Local Government* is a research project that uses case studies in order to explore innovative approaches for building the leadership pipeline at local, state and federal levels, the impacts of these leadership preparation programs. Download the report at [icma.org/pipeline](http://icma.org/pipeline).

- 5) The **local government management profession needs to “grow” its next generation of leaders** to fill the talent gap.

## Challenges in the Regions

In a conversation facilitated by Don Maruska, Director of the Cal-ICMA Coaching Program, Recruiters and State Association Leaders identified a variety of issues and challenges.

### Governing Boards

In a number of regions across the country, many governing boards of local government do not significantly recognize the value of professional management and are slow to appreciate the designation of Credentialed Managers. In the Northeast Region, for example, the profession must confront what was termed “hiring from within” – the tendency to appoint non-career managers (such as local attorneys, business people, former elected officials, military retirees). “Locals” (e.g., a local business person) may get appointed because there is no issue of helping secure expensive housing for an “outsider” and many communities are inwardly-focused and highly partisan.

In such cases, there is a critical need to promote the value of professional local government and to better educate these non-career managers in the Code of Ethics and provide other

professional development resources. In strong-mayor towns and cities in the Northeast, department directors and other senior managers run the government on a daily basis and these are the professionals who need development experiences. Executive Recruiters and State Association Leaders both acknowledged that low salaries offered by governing boards in several Regions, such as the Northeast, create a barrier to attracting professional managers.

In the West Coast Region, some governing boards have asked Executive Recruiters to include private sector managers in the candidate pool so the governing board could have a “choice.” This phenomenon again points to the need to educate elected officials about the value of professional local government management.

In all Regions, a growing number of seasoned as well as younger managers in the shrinking talent pool refuse to consider working for politically volatile and especially “toxic” governing boards.

Several Executive Recruiters have convinced governing boards to rethink residency requirements in high-cost urban areas if they were going to attract professional talent.

### **Downsizing and Development Experience**

In all regions, Summit participants cited budget cuts in the last few years which have eliminated entry-level and step-up positions such as assistant and deputy department head and manager positions, in which up-and-comers have traditionally developed their talent.

***“Since talented managers are in greater demand, they can pick and chose opportunities and avoid “toxic” political cultures.”***

### **ICMA’s “Next Generation” Initiative**

#### ***The Guidebook***

Preparing the Next Generation — A Guide for Current and Future Local Government Managers (2003), a resource book that dissects the talent crisis facing local government, promotes self-development strategies for aspiring managers, and provides best practices for senior managers in developing the next generation.

The Guide is available free of charge at [icma.org/nextgen](http://icma.org/nextgen), under the “For Local Governments” menu bar.

***“University students perceive government work as bureaucratic, second-rate, even mind-numbing work.”***

**ICMA’s  
“Next Generation”  
Initiative**

***The Cal-ICMA Coaching  
Program***

This pilot program sponsored by Cal-ICMA consists of telephone panels of senior managers addressing leadership and career development issues, small group coaching sessions over the telephone for first-time chief executives (or those applying for those positions), and networking events for aspiring managers conducted by Area Manager Groups.

ICMA is working on helping other State Associations replicate this coaching program model.

For more information, go to [www.cal-icma.org](http://www.cal-icma.org) and click on “Coaching Corner.”

**A Lack of Connection with Universities**

There are few universities that focus on local government management and thus few internship programs linking university students to city and county agencies. In the Midwest and West Coast Regions, MPA programs often focus on non-profit management. Where there are MPA programs that generate interest in local government, for instance in the Midwest, recent State budget cuts jeopardize these programs.

**Value Shifts**

Given the incredible numbers of Baby Boomers fighting for advancement, Baby Boomers were willing to go to any locale for their first executive job. Gen X aspiring managers are reluctant to move their families out of their metropolitan area in search of a chief executive position. They are committed to career and “making a difference” but want to balance career with family and personal lives.

In terms of attracting Gen Y or “Millennials” (born 1982-2000) into public service, there is bad news and good news. The bad news is that university students perceive government work as bureaucratic, second-rate, even mind-numbing work (obviously we in public service have a marketing challenge!). The good news is that Millennials have many of the same values that attracted Baby Boomers into government service -- they want to contribute to community and make a difference. The problem is that they perceive that only the third sector --the non-profit world -- offers them the opportunity to better society. The challenge for local government is helping Millennials see the wonderful opportunities offered by public service at the local level.

## Responses to the NextGen Challenge

At the Summit, State Association Leaders described a whole array of emerging initiatives to respond to the “Next Generation” challenge:

- Creating new linkages through the State Associations to Universities, emphasizing the opportunities of local government management careers (Florida, California)
- Developing internship programs as well as participating in ICMA’s Local Government Management Fellowship and Local Government Management Internship Programs (Florida).
- Providing scholarships for students at the high school, undergraduate and graduate levels who show an interest in local government (New Jersey)
- Developing civic education programs for K-12 (Florida, North Carolina)
- Discounting registrations for MPA students and university faculty at the State Association conference (Florida, California)
- Holding the State Association conference on a university campus (Missouri)
- Creating statewide mentoring and coaching programs (California, Florida)

In addition to promoting the value or “performance dividend” of professional local government management, several participants in the Summit suggested that ICMA and State Associations reach out and engage military, business leaders, attorneys and other “non-traditional” local government managers

### ICMA’s “Next Generation” Initiative

#### **Local Government Management Fellowship Program**

Co-sponsored by ICMA, NFBPA, NASPAA, and the International Hispanic Network, this fellowship program attracts the best and the brightest among recent masters program graduates. Each fellow is placed in a full-time management-track position under the guidance of a designated mentor. The first pilot year in 2004 led to the funding and placement of six fellows 14 new positions in 2005, plus three 2004 renewals for a total of 17. For more information, visit [icma.org/lgmf](http://icma.org/lgmf).

#### **Local Government Management Internship Program**

The 2004 LGMF program also led to a partnership between Ohio’s Wittenberg University to promote an undergraduate internship program under the LGMF program umbrella. For more information, visit [www.localintern.org](http://www.localintern.org).

## ICMA's "Next Generation" Initiative

### *The "Emerging Leaders" Program*

Since many mid-career aspiring managers do not qualify for the ICMA Voluntary Credentialing Program and education programs targeted for Credentialed Managers, ICMA has created two programs to develop and strengthen the leadership and management capacity of our next generation members:

**The Emerging Leaders Program** is a self-directed program guided by a Credentialed Manager/Coach.

**Leadership ICMA**, a two-year program of study for class of 15-20 emerging leaders, culminating in a consulting project for a local government.

Find both of these programs at [icma.org/nextgen](http://icma.org/nextgen).

### *University Outreach*

ICMA continues to work with the academic community through the ICMA Advisory Board on Graduate Education and managers

in professional development activities, especially those related to the Code of Ethics. In terms of attracting students into local government service, other participants encouraged State Associations to reach out to Schools of Business and other disciplines in the university as a new source of talent.

## Partnership and Investment Opportunities

At the end of the Summit, Frank Benest, ICMA Vice-President from the West Coast Region, identified a number of partnership opportunities for recruiting firms to invest in ICMA and State Association activities aimed at the Next Generation. (See attached "ICMA-Executive Recruiter Partnership Investment Opportunities.") These included the suggestion that recruiting firms join the "**Friends of the Profession**," a new corporate involvement opportunity developed by ICMA. (Peckham McKinney is the first recruiting firm to join.)

Executive Recruiters were encouraged to help fund Statewide Coaching programs. (The Cal-ICMA Coaching Program is partially funded by CPS Executive Recruiting. Principals from Peckham McKinney, CPS Executive Recruiting and Bob Murray Associates serve on the Cal-ICMA "Preparing the Next Generation Committee" and participate as coaches.)

Recruiting firms can invest in talent exchanges as well as State Association-sponsored internship programs. (Avery & Associates partially fund the Management Talent Exchange Program sponsored by the City Manager Associations of Santa Clara and San Mateo Counties in Northern California.)

In respect to ICMA's Next Generation Initiative, recruiting firms were encouraged to consider funding scholarships or otherwise investing in the Local Government Management Fellowship or Local Government Management Internship Programs, as well as the two new initiatives by ICMA University – The Emerging Leaders Development Program and Leadership ICMA. Assistance is also being sought by ICMA to help replicate coaching programs nation-wide in conjunction with State Associations and Regions.

## Follow-up Actions

Frank Benest indicated that Summit follow-up would include the following:

- Executive Recruiting Firms will be contacted by ICMA to join the "Friends of the Profession," which will support Next Generation partnerships, or invest in other Next Generation program opportunities (e.g., Statewide Coaching Programs, Local Government Management Fellow Scholarships).
- State Associations are urged to reach out and involve Executive Recruiters as speakers at conferences, coaches, and participants on professional committees to develop Next Generation programs at the state level.
- ICMA will keep Executive Recruiters informed of progress in implementing the Next Generation Initiative and of partnership opportunities.

***"The problem is that they perceive that only the third sector --the non-profit world -- offers them the opportunity to better society. "***

### **ICMA's "Next Generation" Initiative**

#### ***Annual Conference Scholarships***

ICMA offers women and minorities who are beginning their careers in local government as well as graduate students in public administration the financial assistance to attend the ICMA annual conference.

#### ***The "Next Generation" Website***

ICMA has launched a new "Next Generation" Web site devoted to students, young professionals and senior managers who want to learn more about "next generation" issues. The website includes job, internship and scholarship opportunities, and other resources. Find it at [icma.org/nextgen](http://icma.org/nextgen).

**ICMA's  
"Next Generation"  
Initiative**

***Public Service Fairs***

ICMA and NFBPA continue to promote local government management careers at university Public Service Fairs each year in different locations across the country.

Several fairs are sponsored by the Public Policy and International Affairs Program (PIIA), yet all expos offer university students and MPA candidates an opportunity to interact with local government managers at workshops and information booths.

***NextGen Membership***

ICMA offers a cost-effective, \$25 electronic membership to students and interns, provides ICMA Annual Conference assistance and scholarships, and offers cost-effective memberships for early-career professionals. Students, interns and fellows can visit [icma.org/nextgen](http://icma.org/nextgen) and select "Joining ICMA" under the "Resources" link.

## For Further Information

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