

A row of firefighter helmets and jackets hanging on a wall. The helmets are yellow with black straps and face shields. The jackets are tan with yellow reflective stripes. The background is a grey brick wall.

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Resolving Everyday Ethics *Challenges*

Why **seeking advice** is **beneficial** | BY MARTHA PEREGO, ICMA-CM

Imagine for a moment that your otherwise productive day is interrupted by an ethical dilemma. Perhaps it was lobbed over into your court by another party, or created by a series of events that unfolds in an unanticipated manner, or maybe it was created by your own conduct. A critical element in plotting out a successful course of action to resolve any problem is having good, complete information. Next, consider whether your outcome would benefit from the advice of an independent, objective, and trusted source. Might that advice help you see all aspects of the issue? Uncover your bias or lack of objectivity? Explore additional avenues to reach your desired outcome?

Of course! And that is why ICMA provides confidential ethics advice to its members. We believe that an impartial but informed outside perspective contributes to better decisions and outcomes. Here are some ethics scenarios where members sought advice on how best to address the issue or presented their proposed course of action for feedback.



MARTHA PEREGO,
ICMA-CM, is

director of member services and ethics director, ICMA, Washington, D.C. (mperego@icma.org).

Considering an Invitation to Speak at a Rally

A deputy city manager was invited to speak at a rally at the county courthouse adjacent to city hall. The invitation came from a coalition of community groups. Alarmed by the rise in violence experienced by members of the Asian American Pacific Islander community, the group seeks to

elevate public awareness of the gravity of the situation and promote changes to the law and new policies to address the harassment and violence. Given the deputy's portfolio within the organization and her tenure, she is well known within the community. She is also the highest-ranking Asian American local government official, elected or appointed, in the region. Clearly the invitation reflects her standing in the community. The deputy is interested in speaking, but what are the ethical implications of doing so?

Answer: The guideline on personal advocacy under Tenet 7 of the Code of Ethics states that members may advocate on behalf of issues. As the deputy city manager, she could also attend to provide information about city policies and practices addressing the issue. But given her role with the city, the deputy may want to expand her exploration to consider these questions:

- Will she be representing the city or speaking as a private individual? The difference may be a nuance from the perspective of the public since one never really stops being an appointed official. But in her remarks, she will want to be clear about who she is representing and whose perspective she is sharing. It would be wise to discuss this with the city manager before committing to the event.
- Who is sponsoring the rally? By virtue of speaking at the event, she may be perceived to be aligned with the sponsor's mission. Is she clear about who they are,

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ICMA's vision is to be the leading association of local government professionals dedicated to creating and supporting thriving communities throughout the world. It does this by working with its more than 12,000 members to identify and speed the adoption of leading local government practices and improve the lives of residents. ICMA offers membership, professional development programs, research, publications, data and information, technical assistance, and training to thousands of city, town, and county chief administrative officers, their staffs, and other organizations throughout the world.

Public Management (PM) aims to inspire innovation, inform decision making, connect leading-edge thinking to everyday challenges, and serve ICMA members and local governments in creating and sustaining thriving communities throughout the world.



where they get their funding, and the policies that they are advocating? She should research the sponsor so that she makes an informed decision. Best not to be caught off guard by a group's advocacy for a policy or activity that runs contrary to the city's position, purpose, or goal.

- Will speaking at the rally affect her ability to do her job? Equal rights and protection for the safety of all should not be a controversial issue. But in an era where virtually all issues are polarized, some consideration should be given to this point. If she concludes that

participating in this event will impair her effectiveness, then it may be best to sit this one out so that she can advance this cause and many others without the potential controversy.

Awarding a Contract to a Firm Where a Principal is Running for County Commission

The county issued an RFP to select engineering firms to work on complex capital improvement projects. Staff were really pleased that the solicitation resulted in a very competitive pool of proposals. When briefed on the process, the county manager raised a concern. The principal in one of the firms who responded to the RFP had recently filed to run for a position on the county board of commissioners. The firm has worked for the county before and has a good track record, as does this engineer. But the engineer's entry into

politics now is raising a legitimate ethics concern for the manager. The proposal identifies this person as the lead engineer on the projects. Given the complexity of the work, should this firm be selected, the work will carry into and beyond the election season. What are the optics of the county awarding a contract to a firm where a principal is running for county commission? Is the integrity of any otherwise objective competitive process compromised? Of note, the general sentiment is that this individual will be successful in their bid for office.

Answer: Whether by experience or instinct, the ability to identify an ethics issue peering over the horizon is enormously helpful. Far better to see it and proactively address it than invest energy to repair the damage

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from the unforeseen, unaddressed issue. This county manager gets kudos for pausing the process to ponder the ethics issues presented here. Clearly, a public agency awarding work to a firm owned by or that employs an elected official raises a huge ethics red flag. Here the award will be made to a firm before the outcome of the election. The result of the event that would create the ethical dilemmas (i.e., the election) is unknown at this time. While it would be best if the candidate were more proactive in minimizing the potential for future ethical issues, the county manager determined that absent a concrete ethical conflict, the county should proceed to make the award based solely on merit. If the

candidate ends up on the county commission with the dual role as engineer for county projects, then the county manager needs a plan to resolve that ethical conflict.

Taking a New Job When Your Soon-to-Be New Mayor May Be Departing

Selected to be the next city administrator, the finalist entered negotiations with the mayor. They reached terms on the employment agreement, which will be on council's agenda for approval. Days before the council meeting, the mayor called the soon-to-be-confirmed administrator to say that he was arrested and may resign from office. The candidate understands that under normal circumstances, he is ethically committed to take the job now that he has verbally agreed to the terms. Does he have any leeway here given that his primary point of contact for the new position and the lead in negotiations may be leaving? What a way to start a new position!

Answer: Adding to the complexity of this situation is the fact that the city has a hybrid form of government. The mayor appoints the city administrator. But the employment agreement is subject to ratification by the city council. Removal of the city administrator is a process that involves both parties. Upon further research, the arrest resulted from a personal situation and had nothing to do with city business. The arrest just happened, so the matter is in its infancy in terms of the legal process. The best approach is for the candidate to attend the city council meeting and if the city council ratifies the agreement with no amendments, show up for work. While it is a bit unnerving to learn that your soon-to-be new mayor may be departing, there are insufficient grounds to ethically walk away. If there is turmoil at the governing level, all the better reason to have a professional manager on board.

Successfully managing an ethical issue requires all three elements of situational awareness: perception, comprehension, and projection. The likelihood of reaching an ethical outcome benefits as well from impartial advice. **PM**

Originally published in the June 2021 issue of PM Magazine.



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icma.org/podcasts

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If you are an ICMA member, we want to hear what's new in your career or organization. All members are welcome to submit—from CAOs to students. Please complete the form at icma.org/spotlight-members. Check out the July Member Spotlight with Donna Gayden, city manager of Long Beach, New York, on the inside back cover of this issue.



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Priority One for Local Government Leaders: Keeping Our Children Safe

Resources to help answer the question that so many of our members are asking: “what can we be doing now?” | BY MARC A. OTT

With each new piece of information that has come to light in the school shooting in Uvalde, Texas, a picture emerges of a local government unprepared to effectively respond to the type of crisis that has been plaguing our nation since 1999.

Over the coming months, local, state, and federal agencies will dissect the actions and lack of action of the law enforcement agents on and behind the scene. But even in incidents where the public safety, school, and other local government officials have acted in an exemplary fashion, the murder of children and educators is something from which communities can never fully recover.

The feeling that most surfaces as I talk to our members about this issue is frustration. What can we be doing now to keep our children safe? In the Voices in Local Government podcast, titled “What Are You Doing About School Shootings? Strategies for the Seemingly Impossible Question CAOs Must Face,” several concrete ideas are discussed,¹ including the following:

- **Use your power to convene.** Hold a tabletop exercise with all relevant parties. Although this is focused on crisis management, bringing people together will build relationships, uncover concerns, and ensure that everyone understands each other’s roles. Sarah Peck of the Public Health Advocacy Institute (PHAI) wrote a fantastic article on page 30 of this issue of *PM* magazine, “Until We Find a Way to Prevent Mass Shootings, Your City Needs to Prepare.” PHAI also developed a very helpful template for holding a tabletop exercise in your community.²
- **Communicate with residents.** Local governments share safety messages with the community regularly, and in the aftermath of an incident that has captured national attention, communicating about the importance of securing guns at home is a powerful message. Gun advocates stress that the most important thing gun owners can do to prevent guns from being stolen or used by their children is to keep their weapons in a gun safe.

- **Review school safety protocols.** You can demonstrate your interest and support for your local school district by asking that they walk you through their safety protocols. The COPS program publication, “Ten Essential Actions to Improve School Safety,” can be used as a guide in facilitating conversations with your local school districts in the spirit of mutual care and concern for the safety of students and teachers.³
- **Connect with public health officials.** Request a report that assesses the mental health system and resources available to students and at-risk segments of your community. This provides an opportunity to ask how the city can advocate for the school district in terms of resources needed for students in crisis. One of our managers delayed his city’s budget process because he felt that allocations for school resource officers, school mental health services, and other budgetary items connected to prevention were not sufficient and needed to be re-evaluated.

One of the most compelling *PM* articles and reports on gun violence focuses on the Parkland, Florida school shootings.⁴ The article poses seven key questions a manager and police chief can ask to help prevent an incident like the one that occurred at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School.

ICMA partner and provider of public safety technical assistance, the Center for Public Safety Management, can help communities assess whether their staffing levels and policies ensure that police are regularly interacting with the community. You can learn more at icma.org/center-public-safety-management-llc or reach out directly to the center’s director Tom Wiczorek at twiczorek@cpsm.us.

“Leadership Before, During, and After a Crisis,” a digital ICMA publication, contains research that points to lessons learned from managers who have faced mass shootings and suggests skills and abilities that managers must continue to develop.⁵ Our gun violence topic page on icma.org features additional content.

As the number of school shootings and other mass shootings continue to multiply, another important step is to tap into the collective wisdom of our members. As we



The goal is to do everything in our power to keep our children safe.

leading practices from your communities. Please feel free to share your examples and thoughts via ICMA Connect at connect.icma.org or directly to me at mott@icma.org or to Tad

prepare for the ICMA Annual Conference in September, we intend to convene a forum, including partners in law enforcement, policy development, and education. In advance of that event, we hope to hear from you. We have begun to collect timely prevention-oriented examples of

McGalliard at tmcgalliard@icma.org. The goal is to do everything in our power to keep our children safe. **PM**

ENDNOTES AND RESOURCES

¹ <https://icma.org/podcast/2022/what-are-you-doing-about-school-shootings-strategies-seemingly-impossible-question-caos-must-face>

² <https://icma.org/documents/mass-shooting-protocol-and-playbook-tabletop-exercise>

³ <https://cops.usdoj.gov/RIC/Publications/cops-w0891-pub.pdf>

⁴ <https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/beyond-parkland-school-shootings>

⁵ <https://icma.org/page/leadership-during-and-after-crisis>



MARC OTT

is CEO/executive director of ICMA, Washington, D.C.

Three Things to Keep in Mind about Equity Work in Your Municipality

BY SOCORRO SHIELS

No matter where your community happens to be on its equity journey, these reminders are good to bear in mind along the way.

As the inaugural diversity, inclusion, and equal employment officer for the city of Santa Rosa, California, I have been honored to be part of a local government system trying to figure it all out.

The opportunity to plan and organize the strategic development, implementation, and continuous evaluation of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plans, programs, initiatives, and policies was a captivating call. These complex issues facing our communities are decades in the making. Historical public policy has reflected the legalized discrimination of the times, with compounding effects on individual wealth, opportunity,

and access to services for generations. These impacts can be mapped to specific communities and demographics across the United States. Understanding how to address this historical harm—while doing today's and tomorrow's local government work in an open-minded and innovative manner—is the key to unlocking progress for our entire community.

This doesn't come easily, nor is it a quick fix. There is a continuum of understanding as an organization and as a community. It is both an art and a political dance to ensure that this is an organizational priority met with the same urgency and grit that many other emergency and crisis items have the political winds on which to rely. Here are some critical takeaways from my year and a half on the job:

Equity acknowledges from the beginning that different people and parts of the community experience life in different ways and some groups are situated farther from opportunity and success.

1. Equity is a frame, not a check box.

Equity is a simple yet complex concept. It is a profound sense of fairness and justice in practice. To work in this value means the organization dedicates time and resources to ensure that local government centers resident needs and voices in all parts of service and practice. Equity acknowledges from the beginning

that different people and parts of the community experience life in different ways and some groups are situated farther from opportunity and success. This work is about understanding that and targeting strategies to move everyone closer to universal goals.

There are no definitive answers in this forward-thinking model. Equity work is more than diversity, belonging, and engagement. It manifests all those requisite ingredients in collective transformative change. It is iterative and constantly evolving and relies on quantitative and qualitative data. We need to find and share examples because people need to see and understand what we are asking them to do differently in both small and large ways. We need to track, measure, and admit different outcomes by disaggregated groups and create targeted solutions to do better for all.

2. Even if everyone is interested, commitment is necessary.

These journeys are about profound organizational change. Being willing to take a critical look inward and unpack everything we thought we knew and did well takes time, focus, budget dollars, and intention. This process will be ongoing and has no end date. Work plans and evaluation tools have to reflect the continuous improvement for all, as do budgets, strategic plans, and priorities. Support needs to come from the bottom up and from the top down. Everyone has to be willing to make specific changes that uplift disparate outcomes, highlight the data about differentiated experiences, and commit to doing their work differently with targeted strategies and tactics—no matter what position in the organization they hold.

These issues need grit. We need to commit to seeing these problems through to the end. That might not be the most used organizational muscle, where dabbling versus diving in has been the historical response. We need both political and community will to address this and the support for the time it takes to see authentic results in the organization and the community.



SOCORRO SHIELS is diversity, inclusion, and equal employment officer for Santa Rosa, California.



3. Respectful learning culture and psychological safety are prerequisites.

Unpacking current practices with a critical lens is hard work. The status quo nature of bureaucracy and the inherent power structure of the hierarchy exist as mechanisms that chill uplifting differences in organizational perspectives and resist the urgency to respond and change. There will have to be explicit permission given to speak truthfully about practices.

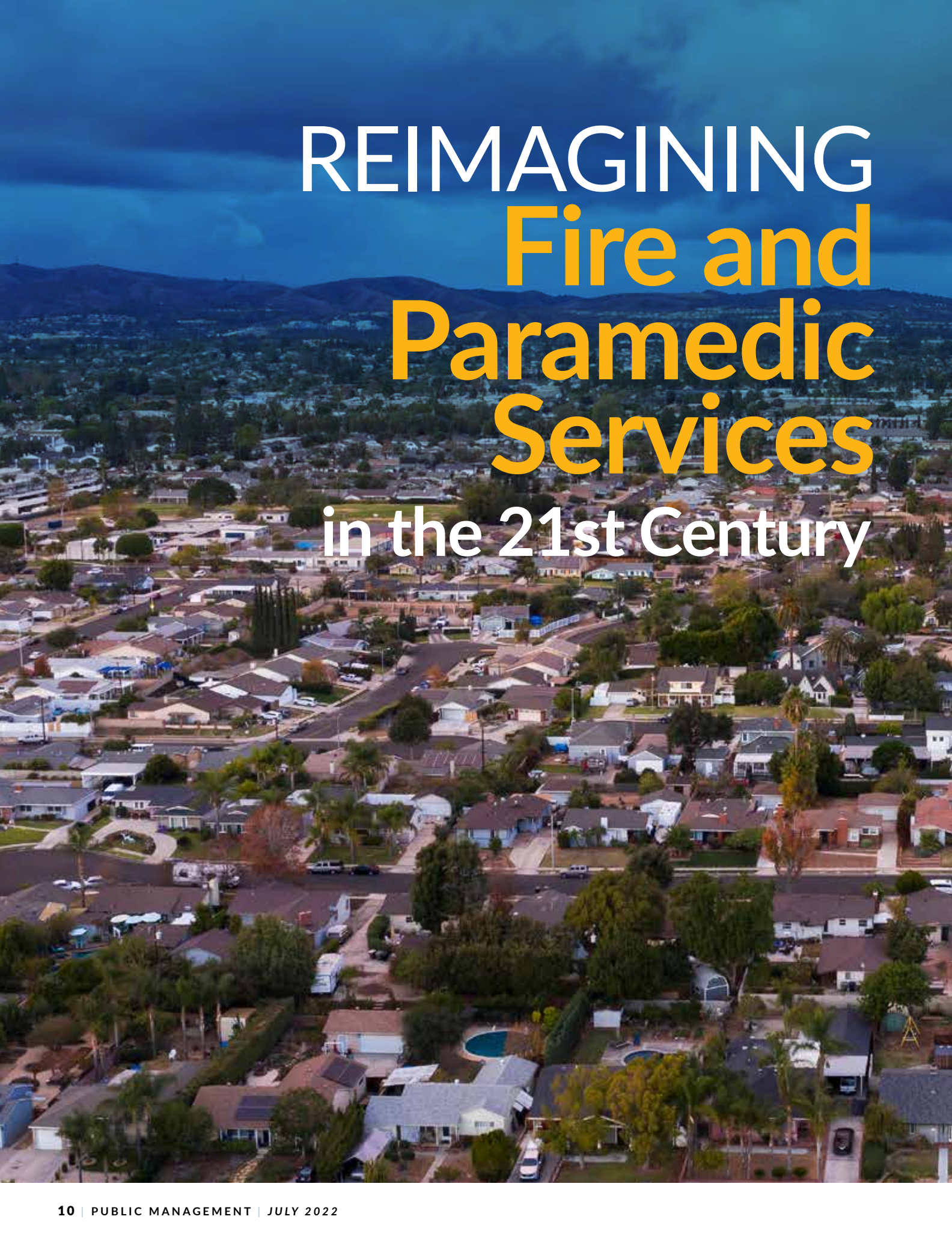
People in power must intentionally create a safe psychological space for those willing to name problems and learn to receive feedback without hostility and defensiveness while still maintaining the responsibility for leading change, especially when we name racialized and gendered experiences, which we have been historically urged to ignore. The need to have difficult conversations about topics we rarely speak about in the job space—race, culture, oppression, justice—is paramount and is not simply the responsibility of the BIPOC employees or other members of your diverse community. We are not yet in the habit of practicing

The need to have difficult conversations about topics we rarely speak about in the job space—race, culture, oppression, justice—is paramount and is not simply the responsibility of the BIPOC employees or other members of your diverse community.

organizational humility. It has been hard to admit mistakes and stand in healing spaces with the community acknowledging that the government has been a perpetrator of harm. This requires strong leadership that listens and avoids defensive tactics and deflections. Real change requires courageous leadership forward.

My local government, like yours, is filled with people who are kind and generous and love our city. With differences in lived experiences and a largely homogenous workforce that does not always reflect the most underserved parts of the community, it is sometimes difficult to imagine that everyday people doing the city's ongoing work may have inadvertently played a hand in supporting the status quo and denying residents the opportunities they deserve.

As we work to reimagine the system itself and the structural barriers and institutional inequities, it is imperative to understand how individuals do this work. Many of their equity lenses are only now being developed. Moving forward together is the only way. As James Baldwin reminded us, “Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.” **PM**



REIMAGINING Fire and Paramedic Services in the 21st Century

How the city of Placentia left a joint powers authority fire department to start its own municipal fire department and contracted EMS program.

BY LUIS ESTEVEZ

Long-term solutions to fiscal sustainability drove Placentia's need to reevaluate its fire and EMS service model.

In 1975, the original Placentia Fire Department was disbanded, and the city of Placentia began contracting with Orange County for fire protection and paramedic services. In the wake of the Orange County bankruptcy of 1995, the Orange County Fire Department was separated from the county structure and spun off into a new joint powers authority (JPA) agreement. Placentia became a founding member of the JPA as a “cash contract” city. For the next 25 years, the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) provided fire protection and emergency medical services (EMS) to the Placentia community out of two city-owned fire stations.

The OCFA JPA agreement among the member cities is structured in such a way that allows the agency to raise its rates on cash contract cities every year by 4.5%, year after year, regardless of any change or improvement to service levels or economic conditions. Regional service provider contracts like these typically require a one-size-fits-all approach, which does not allow cities to customize their service levels based on their actual risk profile, resulting in higher rather than reduced costs for contract cities. The loss of local control over these critical services essentially prevents cities from exercising any long-term cost controls, nor does it allow for improving the quality of services provided or innovation in delivering those services in new ways.

Since 2009 and through the Great Recession of the late 2000s, OCFA had increased the cost to provide fire and EMS to Placentia by 47% while providing no increases in service levels. Essentially, the cost to staff two Type I fire engines responding to emergencies out of two fire stations was growing by nearly double the rate of inflation every year. Simultaneously, the city cut services to the community and deferred much needed infrastructure repairs to afford these cost increases. In addition, within the same 10-year period, the Placentia Police Department's budget shrank by 9% and the city's general fund budget for all departments increased by only 12%. This represents a 57% difference in increases between the city's two public safety service operations—police and fire—despite police handling a much larger call volume.

Such a large increase, when compared to the remainder of the city's full-service operations and departments, was far outstripping the city's ability to absorb these costs. This warranted a complete re-evaluation of fire and EMS service delivery options for our community. As we began



Placentia, California



Photo courtesy of City of Placentia, CA

new technologies such as fire sprinkler systems, were quickly evolving and being adapted to make buildings safer. As a result, the number of fires and large-scale conflagrations experienced in urban areas were vastly reduced.

Consequently, the fire service in California assumed a larger role in providing paramedic services to maintain and justify its staffing levels and operating budgets. Today, the vast majority of fire department 911 emergency calls for service are for EMS. In fact, nearly 80% of the emergency calls to OCFA in Placentia for 2019 were for medical purposes, and very few (less than 1%) were for fighting fire.

Additionally, most EMS calls were at the basic life support (BLS) level, as only 30% of EMS calls for service were for high-acuity medical events (ALS), such as cardiac arrest, strokes, gunshot wounds, and traumatic injuries.

that journey, we determined our main objectives for the process:

- Implement a financially sustainable and responsible service model.
- Reduce emergency response times.
- Build a resilient service model that reduces reliance on mutual aid from surrounding communities.
- Improve the overall quality of both services.

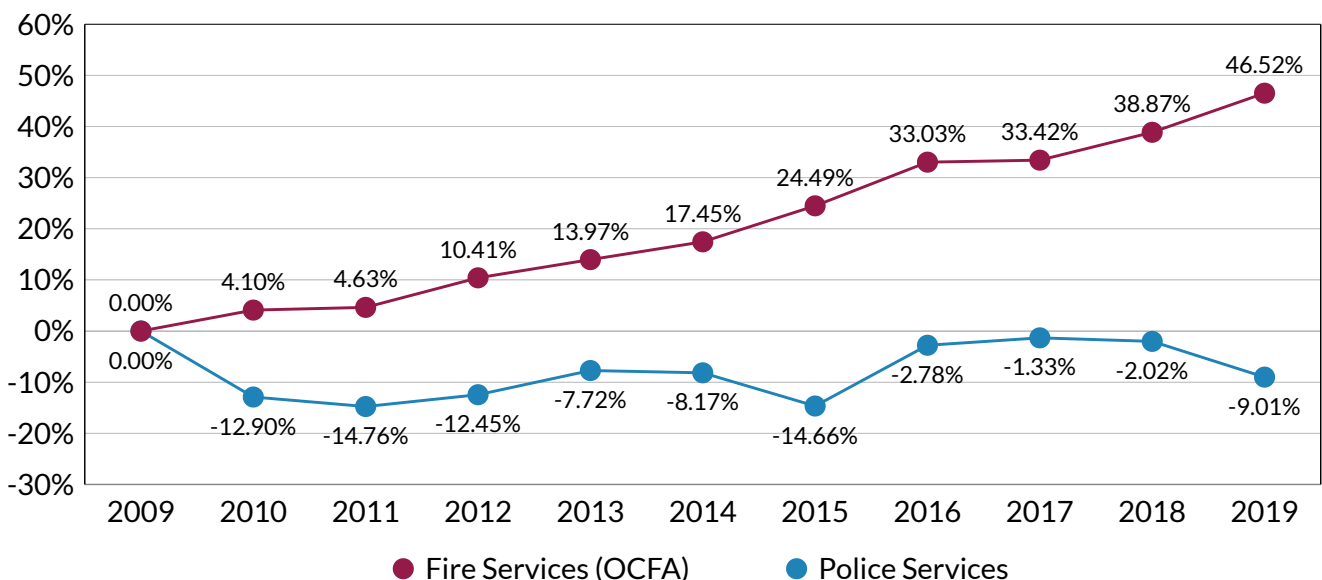
Placentia's service model was created by analyzing service call data and the city's actual risk profile. EMS is a healthcare function, not a public safety function.

Southern California was ground-zero in the early 1970s for the first paramedic programs in the state. Started by hospitals and employing

private ambulance companies, the earliest paramedic programs were created by emergency room physicians who developed medical protocols to provide pre-hospital medical services to patients in the field, which were based in part on lessons learned in combat medicine in Vietnam.

At the same time, new development codes to make structures safer during earthquakes, and

Figure 1. City of Placentia – OCFA (Fire) vs. Placentia Police Department, 10-Year Percent Change of Expenditures



In Placentia today, the vast majority of fire department 911 emergency calls for service are for EMS. In 2019, very few (less than 1%) were for fighting fire.

Understanding this dynamic, the city set out to develop a new service model that better reflected the city's actual risk profile and actual service needs and allowed for a more intelligent deployment of public safety resources. The city understood early on that bifurcating fire and EMS would not only allow both services to be delivered in a much more cost-effective manner, but also improve overall quality by allowing the fire department to focus their efforts on fire protection and prevention, and by allowing paramedics to focus their efforts on EMS.

The traditional fire service model in California continues to utilize an engine company or a truck company to respond to all medical emergencies—and the method of deployment is to triage all medical calls as ALS, regardless of the patient's condition. As such, a bee sting generates the same level of EMS response as a gunshot wound. However, the city still needed

to gain a deeper understanding of the full scope and scale of the services provided by the OCFA by analyzing its service call data. With that in mind, the city engaged the services of the Center for Public Safety Management (CPSM) to complete a detailed workload analysis report, which summarized the overall services received by the city from its contracted provider.

Utilizing an entire year's worth of computer-aided dispatch (CAD) data provided by OCFA, CPSM was able to complete a deep dive of the full scale of emergency responses provided by OCFA working out of both city fire stations. This analysis offered the clearest picture of the full scope and nature of emergency calls for services provided to the city, as well as a much deeper understanding of the city's actual risk exposure. Ultimately, this allowed Placentia to coalesce around a new service model that bifurcates both services.

Understanding that the bulk of the work provided by OCFA was EMS, the city's service model provides for a municipal fire department focused on fire prevention and life safety services, and a separate service contract with a private EMS service provider focused on providing 911/advanced life support (ALS) paramedic services. Although separate entities, both work and train together daily and the city's paramedic service provider is posted in and responds out of the city's two fire stations. Placentia was the first city in Orange County to contract with a private provider for 911/ALS even though private paramedics provide these same services in 56 out

of 58 California counties and throughout the rest of the United States.

Progressing from workload analysis to requests for proposals.

To objectively evaluate all of its potential options for the bifurcated delivery of fire protection and EMS services, the city developed and issued two comprehensive Requests for Proposals (RFPs)—one for fire protection, prevention, and investigation services; and one for 911/ALS. The RFPs were designed to solicit competitive proposals from the open market (public and private) to better

evaluate all options available to Placentia and its residents. These RFPs and the method to procure these services were the first of their kind in Orange County. The city's proposal to send ambulances staffed by two single-role paramedics to medical calls instead of four firefighters riding on a 55,000-pound fire engine or 75,000-pound fire truck was considered radical at the time, even though this model is used throughout the state and is the predominant service model throughout the country.

An RFP review committee comprised of local leaders and subject matter experts



Photo courtesy of City of Placentia, CA



Photo courtesy of City of Placentia, CA

Placentia's new service model has resulted in vastly reduced response times and mutual aid assistance and is saving the city approximately \$3 million per year in general fund operating costs.

The city's new fire department staffs its heavy fire apparatuses with a three-person full-time company and one reserve firefighter when available. In addition, the city utilizes a complement of part-time firefighters in backfill capacities to reduce overtime expenditures, thus significantly reducing long-term operating costs.

In addition, when designing the department, the city took the unique and forward-thinking step of ensuring that the retirement benefits provided to the new employees are sustainable over the long term. To that end, Placentia was the first city in Orange County to offer public safety personnel a defined contribution 457 plan, thus saving significantly on upfront and long-term pension debt costs. The city's 911/ALS service provider staffs two ambulances with four paramedics 24 hours a day, with a third reserve ambulance and crew to provide surge capacity as needed, at a cost of over just \$1 million per year.

What is also important to note about the city's service model is how resilient it is and how little mutual aid is needed on a day-to-day basis from our neighbors. Because the city does not send its firefighters to the hospital with patients, they are thus kept in service and available to respond to emergencies over longer stretches of time than neighboring agencies. The

practice of "wall time," which affects all fire departments in Orange County, essentially takes a fire apparatus and crew out of service while they are waiting against the wall in the hospital to hand off their patient to a nurse or physician. This practice often creates unnecessary overtime and draws down resources from surrounding fire stations to backfill the unit waiting at the hospital.

Using a private EMS provider with an existing infrastructure provides for an extensive surge capacity in Placentia for multi-casualty incidents and other large-scale emergencies. This resilience in our service model was proven in October 2020, as two separate wildfires burned in North Orange County at the same time. We watched in real-time as fire suppression units were being sent by our neighboring agencies from far away distances to respond to medical emergencies because the fire suppression units who would ordinarily be dispatched to those medical calls were occupied working the fire lines. In Placentia, our medic units continued to respond to medical emergencies during these fires without having to request mutual aid assistance from our neighbors and delay emergency response and patient care as a result. System resilience is achieved only by bifurcating fire and EMS services.

Overall, the transition, implementation, and performance of Placentia's new fire and EMS service model has exceeded the city's and community's expectations. When the city began this process, we were unaware of just how out of balance the reciprocal automatic/mutual aid system was between Placentia's neighbors

was established to review the proposals and make a recommendation to the city council. Fire protection proposals were received from neighboring cities, and city staff prepared and submitted a competitive proposal on behalf of the city to form the Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department. Based on the recommendation from the committee to proceed with establishing a city fire department and enter into an agreement with a private paramedic service provider, the Placentia City Council voted in 2019 to establish the Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department and awarded a contract to

Lynch EMS for 911/ALS.

Over the course of the following year, the city hired, equipped, and trained a modern fire department, launched a new EMS program in partnership with Lynch, and completely retooled the city's 911 dispatch center into an all-hazard emergency communication center—all during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Placentia Fire and Life Safety Department and Lynch EMS took command at 8:00 a.m. on July 1, 2020, and by 8:20 a.m., they had been dispatched to their first fire—a small kitchen fire that was quickly extinguished.

and OCFA, which saw the municipal fire departments backfilling OCFA response areas by a ratio of 60% to 40%. As a result, the call volume for Placentia units was unexpectedly higher after July 1, 2020. However, Placentia units today are handling 40% more calls than OCFA units had handled, which has only been possible because of our system's resilience, as previously described.

More tellingly, our service model has reduced mutual aid assistance into Placentia by more than 80%! However, most importantly, we have reduced emergency response times by an average of 3 minutes. In a business where every second counts, the new service model's response times have far exceeded expectations. Our Lynch paramedics were credited with 14 cardiac saves in our community of 51,000 residents in their first year of operation. This success can also be attributed to sending ambulances instead of fire suppression apparatuses to respond to medical emergencies, stationing the city's 911/ALS provider

inside the city's fire stations, and the city's investment in emergency vehicle traffic signal preemption devices, which are also used by our police department, reducing their response times as well.

As illustrated in Figure 2, over the next 15 years, Placentia is projected to save approximately \$30 million in general fund dollars with the establishment of its own locally controlled fire department and privatized EMS program.

While the data clearly demonstrates the success and efficacy of the city's service model, on May 20, 2022, the Orange County Grand Jury issued a report specifically calling out Placentia's model as a new and better approach to EMS. In its report titled, "Where's the Fire? Stop Sending Fire Trucks to Medical Calls," the Orange County Grand Jury conducted an in-depth investigation and analysis of Orange County's EMS system interviewing OCFA leadership, fire chiefs inside and outside of Orange County, city managers, personnel from Orange County EMS, and private ambulance company

executives, as well as fire union leadership. The Grand Jury's report validated the city's data and approach and most of the recommendations the Grand Jury made in the report have already been implemented in Placentia. The Grand Jury also singled out the city in its report with a special commendation for innovation in the face of concerted opposition.

Placentia's success was rooted in the city council's and city administrator's implicit trust in one another and staying true to the commitment that this effort was being pursued for the right reasons and for the betterment of the community. No matter how politically challenging Placentia's desire to change the status quo became at times, the team did not stray from its mission. We put our faith in the process and allowed data, transparency, and continuous communication with the community, and common sense to determine our path forward. The results and recognition clearly speak for themselves. **PM**

Key Takeaways

- Bigger is not always better. Contracting with a regional fire protection service provider requires a one-size-fits-all service model, it always costs more with no control over service levels or quality, and there is little incentive for innovation or adaptability.
- Analysis of Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and workload analysis data is critical in understanding your community's actual risk profile and developing a new service model.
- Separating fire protection and prevention services from emergency medical services reduces cost, reduces response times, and improves the overall quality of both services.
- EMS is a healthcare function, not a public safety function.

LUIS ESTEVEZ

is deputy city administrator of Placentia, California.



Figure 2

Total Forecasted Savings (15 Years)			
	2021-2022 Budget	Estimated Costs through 2029-2030	Average Annual Cost through 2030
OCFA	7,429,487	87,687,296	8,768,730
City Fire Department	4,126,300	46,059,340	4,605,934
EMS Contract	1,034,378	11,177,282	1,117,728
Total Savings	2,268,810	30,450,674	3,317,126

Strategic Global Engagement by Local Fire Departments:

THE CASE OF NORTHERN VIRGINIA

Encouraging stories of international exchanges among fire departments around the world

BY DR. DALE MEDEARIS, JOHN MORRISON,
ELI RUSS, JUSTIN TIRELLI, DR. JEREMY CAMPBELL,
AND RANDALL SHANK

Like no other time before, local governments in the United States have been drawn onto the global stage. This is especially the case with the work of fire departments and their shared work around the world to protect the public from such threats as fire, hazardous waste spills, or even terror attacks. These common priorities, along with the complex aspects of their work, compel more formal and systemic exchanges of data, information, policies, technologies, and personnel.

But experience has revealed that global cooperation at the local level in general—but especially through the very complex and technical work of fire departments—is not as easy as “add water and stir.” The technically complex, legally complicated, and politically



intricate programs guiding hazardous waste response, search-and-rescue training, building code design, or terror attack response planning differs greatly between Arlington County, Virginia, in the United States; Aachen, Germany, in Europe; or Guelph, Ontario, in Canada. Creating international exchanges between fire departments that lead to outcomes benefitting Main Street is critical, especially in this age of local governmental budget and resource scarcity.

However, there are some encouraging stories emerging, especially across the Northern Virginia (NOVA) region, in which multiple fire departments have been working internationally for



years and in contexts that point to a pathway for further national replication. The following summarizes that the work by the fire departments of Arlington County, Fairfax County, and Loudoun County, highlighting innovative forms of engagement with counterparts in Europe, collaboration with locally based research and academic partners, and involving high-priority topics.

Arlington County — Aachen, Germany

Since 2014, under the umbrella of the Arlington County Sister City partnership with Aachen, Germany, the Arlington County

Fire Department has worked with other fire departments to share programs and operations innovations about hazardous materials cleanup, bomb squad remediation, and emergency response.

Three separate delegations of firefighters from Aachen have spent time in Arlington to exchange perspectives about safety codes for homes and buildings, flood rescue procedures, and even active shooter responses. The partnership has involved exchanges about perspectives concerning technical differences deployed between departments to fight fires, promotion of safe designs and codes, and training strategies. Since the severe flooding in



Aachen, Germany

central Germany in 2021, in which approximately 300 lives were lost, there is interest among both departments to pursue further exchanges related to training protocols, operational procedures, and response strategies.

Loudoun County — Main Taunus Kreis, Germany

Since 2015, the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue Program has pursued exchanges with counterparts from the Main-Taunus-Kreis district in Germany, an area northwest of Frankfurt.

Several small-scale peer-to-peer exchanges of personnel at the staff and management level have focused on information sharing about incidence and emergency response operations. Loudoun County Deputy Chief Randall Shank spent a week at the Main-Taunus-Kreis emergency communications and operations centers and training facilities. In 2017, four firefighters from Main-Taunus-Kreis toured Loudoun County

to study the training academy, as well as the emergency and communications center operations.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department — George Mason University Partnership with Analytical and Geospatial Research

Since 1986, the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department (FCFRD) has been one of two departments in the United States tasked by the U.S. Agency for International Development to undertake sudden-onset disaster response around the world. Over 200 paramedics, engineers, firefighters, and emergency planners from Fairfax County are assigned to be prepared to aid in emergency response efforts around the world. Staff from Fairfax County also actively take part in multiple global coordination efforts to coordinate disaster response.

Moreover, since 2020, George Mason University (GMU) and FCFRD

have undertaken a unique partnership that points to opportunities for a special global exchange related to cross-national applied science and technology cooperation that supports local emergency response efforts. Graduate-level students and faculty

working in data analytics from GMU have partnered with the FCFRD's Data Analytics Strategy Management Division to help graduate students working toward their degrees use real-world data in their capstone projects to apply their education. The students and



Arlington, Virginia

faculty from the Volgenau School of Engineering access, analyze, and geospatially portray topics such as volume and nature of calls for service related to socioeconomic data and hazards response. This work has the opportunity to extend to other fire departments across the region and via global connections with counterpart academic and research centers in Aachen or the Frankfurt region.

The Road Ahead: NOVA's Fire Departments as a National Model for Global Engagement

The global trends pulling the fire departments of local governments further onto the global stage look to accelerate for the short and long term. This is especially the case for important local and national issues such as climate change, building safety and design, or terror response planning.



Sterling, Loudoun County, Virginia

The current work by NOVA's fire departments offers a solid basis on which future work can build as well as inform the work of other fire departments across the country. The research partnerships between Fairfax County and George Mason University highlight a particularly special opportunity as large research institutions such as Mason have multiple globally oriented faculty, research, and student exchanges that could involve bilateral foreign counterparts. Moreover, bilateral partnerships such as those between Arlington and Aachen could weave in existing high school exchanges and include a vocational training element.

Overcoming funding deficits, especially to facilitate future exchange of personnel, remains an issue for future collaboration. Future funding might be successfully applied to programmatic and research functions in strategic contexts. Partnering with the International Association of Fire Chiefs could represent a start. Themes for future work between counterparts abroad could involve data centers, fixed fire protection systems, accessibility for people with

disabilities, and coordination of post-fire investigations and subsequent codes and training.

Conclusion

Global engagement by local governments is now a necessity and no longer voluntary. The engagement of fire departments is central to these efforts because of the profound

importance of their work and the commonality of their missions. The stories of these Northern Virginia counties paint a remarkably positive and leading example for this work. Strengthening it and replicating it across the country seems to be a win-win for local fire departments, cross-national cooperation, and for the United States. **PM**

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Managing Through Tragedies

Keeping Your Career Intact and on Track

BY ROBERT L. BLAND
AND
LEWIS F. MCLAIN JR.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that community-wide tragedies—natural or technological disasters, human tragedies, or pandemics—impose a toll on the tenure of a city or county chief executive. Whether a loss of confidence, an expedient excuse, or a poor fit with the community’s needs, any tragedy that disrupts the normal rhythm of community life strains working relationships among those in leadership roles.

We draw on the anecdotal observations of panelists at the 2020 ICMA Annual Conference and from conversations with managers to assess the impact of crises on the careers of city, town, or county executives.

Types of Community-wide Tragedies

Tragedies come in many forms; each varies in intensity, impact, and duration. Each is unique. In dealing with tragedies, however, local governments follow a similar pattern beginning with preparation and planning for a possible event, then responding once the event occurs, followed by recovering from the event, while taking ongoing measures to mitigate the impact of recurrences.

Some tragedies come with advance warnings that enable alerting residents of the imminent danger. Tsunami sirens dot the Pacific islands; phone and text notifications are now widely used to alert residents to imminent natural or technological hazards. Others, however, arise with no warning. An explosion of stored ammonium nitrate wrought death and destruction on the small town of West, Texas; a radioactive leak from a nuclear power plant turned the city of Pripjat, Ukraine, into a ghost town; a terrorist attack turned once-towering civic symbols into a national tragedy. Such events expose the vulnerabilities of a community and strain the manager’s leadership skills.

To better understand the consequences of tragedies on public executive careers, we begin by categorizing tragedies into four types: natural disasters, human-initiated tragedies, operational tragedies, and borderless tragedies.

Natural disasters tend to be repetitive, thereby giving local governments an opportunity to gain institutional knowledge at responding to and recovering from these events. For the coastal regions or “tornado alleys,” the question is not if but when will the disaster occur? Managers in





**For the manager,
human-induced
tragedies pose complex
issues involving public
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prevention of a
reoccurrence.**

these communities likely have well-developed response plans that have been refined from table-top drills with first responders. The variation in intensity and duration of these disasters likely affect a local government's capacity for timely response and recovery. If the disaster is more intense or destructive than in the past, residents may have unrealistic expectations for the speed of the local response and the length of time for recovery. Managing those expectations, while keeping a disaster-weary staff engaged, may exhaust the most passionate manager.

Human-initiated tragedies are usually idiosyncratic—civil violence, a police shooting, terrorist attack, mass shooting, or an industrial accident. These events may be accidental or intentional, but all involve human action and thus are difficult to predict. The single event or even a single person becomes magnified by snippets of cell phone video that amplify the drama of the story.

Following the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the newly established Department of Homeland Security implemented a color-coded system to alert Americans to the perceived risk of a terrorist attack. But it proved ineffective, and in 2011, the system was replaced with a notification using bulletins to describe the level of threat. Like natural disasters, human-induced tragedies vary in their intensity and scope. Unlike natural disasters, they are generally perceived as preventable, or at least avoidable. For the manager, these events pose more complex issues involving public outrage mixed with

often unrealistic expectations for prevention of a reoccurrence.

Operational tragedies pose yet another set of challenges for the manager. A ransomware demand, malfeasance by an employee, or a protracted power outage can trigger public outrage and finger pointing. The failure may be a cost overrun of a high-profile project. Aging infrastructure is emerging as a hot topic as warnings have gone out of an impending crisis. Even more than human-induced tragedies, operational tragedies are perceived

as preventable. They undermine a local government's credibility, possibly even its bond rating, and arm critics with evidence of a lapse in internal controls and administrative oversight.

Borderless tragedies, such as the coronavirus pandemic, pose yet another set of challenges for local governments and their chief executive. The previous types of tragedies were confined to a locality or at most a region. Pandemics have no boundaries and, as such, create unique management challenges. These events have much longer response and recovery timelines. Mitigation measures, such as social distancing and facial masks, become a point of contention, particularly for those with little trust in government. A manager's response is further limited by the actions (or inactions) of state and federal governments. The lack of a coherent and scientifically defensible plan for combatting the epidemic renders moot a local manager's efforts at mitigation. Yet their leadership remains the most visible and accessible for a frustrated, confused, and weary public.





Another borderless tragedy emerging on the international horizon is the cumulative consequences of climate change. The international scope of these borderless tragedies and the essential role of overlapping governments will place unprecedented expectations on the local manager to find solutions to global problems. Borderless tragedies demand a coordinated and coherent policy response by overlapping governments, something that the state and federal governments have not yet achieved with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Whatever the national response, local governments and their executive team will have a significant role in implementing measures to reverse the adverse effects of the environmental tragedies caused by climate change. And rather than placing blame or denying the problem, our collective energy should be placed on accepting the reality of the tragedy and formulating a plausible response.

What We Know About the Impact of Tragedies

Research shows that prior experience by both the local government and its manager affect job performance.¹ A city or county that experiences wildfires likely has acquired both the institutional knowledge and operational capability to expedite its response to and recovery from the next fire tragedy. Some tragedies may defy experience. A public health pandemic with a global reach may overwhelm local efforts to confine the outbreak. On the other hand, a mosquito eradication program to prevent the spread of disease depends on the timely response of a local government.

Each city, town, and county responds differently to a tragedy. That response is constrained by its financial, technological, organizational, and institutional capabilities. No amount of managerial leadership can fully compensate for these constraints. And no amount of managerial skills can substitute for past negligence in planning and preparing for a crisis. A manager's capacity to lead the community through a tragedy cannot rise much above those limitations. But as former Dallas City Manager A. C. Gonzalez observed, "These incidents are city and county management's super bowl—high stakes, lots of attention, great excitement and consternation, and an avalanche of activities."

Interlocal agreements and state and federal aid extend those capabilities, although that outside support comes at a price in the loss of local control over the event. As noted by City Manager Michael Kovacs at the 2020 ICMA conference, the potential for subsequent disallowance for some use of the federal aid, especially by FEMA, frequently occurs. Mary Suhm, former Dallas city manager, convinced FEMA to assign two of its auditors to assist the city in maintaining records during Hurricane Katrina, which later proved helpful in expediting FEMA's reimbursement to the city.

Research suggests that, in the case of natural disasters, better planning and preparation by local governments expedite the recovery phase.² As the response and recovery from a tragedy grind on, residents who at one time were grateful now grow increasingly frustrated. A reasonable implication, although not verified by research, is that the more prolonged the recovery from a tragedy, the greater the dissatisfaction of residents. Once the recovery has been launched, it must be seen as moving steadily forward.

Communication with residents during and following a tragedy has been repeatedly found as critical to the road back to normalcy.³ Jim Prosser, former city manager of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, recommends that city/county managers "design communications from the perspective of stakeholders (of the 2008 floods), not local government.... (T)rust is the one currency we have in local government. Once lost, it is very hard to restore." Lauren Gill, recently retired town manager of Paradise, California, commented that "the most critical need is communication. Repeated, clear information to victims (of the 2018 Camp Fire) was critical."

Managing Personal Needs Through a Tragedy

No amount of planning, role playing, or investment in technology can guarantee that a community will successfully ride the storm waves of a tragedy. Nor can managers reach for failsafe measures that provide assurance that their careers will continue unscathed. The manager's top priority is to help guide the community through the response and recovery to normalcy as quickly as possible.

Tragic events reveal a community's past prudent investment in planning and preparing for a tragedy, even those that are impossible to anticipate. Unfortunately, these events also reveal past negligence in preparing for such possibilities. Deferred maintenance, poor planning or zoning practices, under-funded training of staff, and the lack of investment in equipment are revealed under a tragedy's spotlight. Inadequate funding because of a declining tax base or short-sighted demands for fiscal austerity are exposed by crises. The current manager may not be responsible for that negligence yet receives the blame when those investments were most needed.

Even more importantly is the investment by the manager in building a vibrant organizational culture, one that believes in the value of public service and works to gain community loyalty. Training for disasters—natural, human, or operational—while necessary is not sufficient. Employee loyalty and trust in the organization's leadership must be earned before a tragedy in order to sustain the community through the crisis.

Tragedies demand extraordinary amounts of a manager's time and attention, often to the neglect of other needs, including family and personal mental and physical health. As the tragedy abates, both the manager and immediate family may be exhausted physically and emotionally. Bob Hart, city manager of Corinth, Texas, and former manager of Pampa, Texas, when in 1987 the Celanese Chemical Plant blew up, observed that managers almost always leave a position 18 to 24 months after the crisis abates, most often because of exhaustion.

Those in public service are drawn to the profession because of the opportunity to, as in the closing line of the Athenian Oath, "transmit this city not only, not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us." No profession better exemplifies those ideals than city and county management. But a tragedy brings out both the best and the worst in human nature. After having put forth the best effort to restore normalcy, there are limits to how much a manager can do to overcome the disruptions to the social and economic fabric of a community.

Termination of the manager, after having expended extraordinary effort, may lead to disillusionment, or worse, leaving the profession. The best that managers can do is prepare themselves and their families professionally and emotionally for that possibility. Speaking from personal experience, Mike Kovacs advised to "be realistic, especially if you come in as manager when the recovery has been going poorly. Know that you are part of that recovery. But also know that you may be one of its casualties."

Crises accentuate latent mistrust in a community. But that does not negate pursuing the noble cause that drew us to this profession. Crises are moments of truth for government, noted Jim Prosser. He added that standing for the ethical principles of our profession in the face of political pressure is critically important.

Managing the Organization Through a Tragedy

Managers who have prepared themselves mentally and emotionally for a crisis will likely be much better prepared to guide their community through the turbulence. Here are a few recommendations for navigating through a tragedy.

1. Not only is communication with residents key to reducing collective anxiety, but communication must also be with the staff.

For the manager, the first line of support is from their staff. Clay Phillips, retired city manager of Coppel, Texas, noted, "What really saved us (following a human tragedy) is that we had invested heavily in our corporate culture definition and development, so we were prepared as a staff to deal with whatever came our way."

2. Effective communication also means not over-promising results or elevating public expectations to unattainable levels.

When state and federal agencies become involved, political leaders at those levels have a tendency to over-promise results, putting local officials into a difficult position if those promises are not met.

3. Roleplay a tragedy scenario with the council.

In addition to explaining the technical responses, focus on the consequences of poor communications or even miscommunications. For example, the police and fire chiefs should illustrate their commands to first responders, then show how easy it is for the council-manager relationship to deteriorate. Voices should be raised; inject the realism of barked orders and damaging accusations in rapid-fire conditions.

4. Establish who is in charge in the crisis and what they are in charge of.

This is much more than agreeing that the mayor, and only the mayor, is the public face and voice. It is about who is in charge of the troops—and more importantly, how are the troops going to be supported throughout the crisis. This is the quintessential moment to be candid with your governing body. Most importantly, the goal is for relationships to remain intact. Some managers report that the bond with the council became stronger after a crisis.

5. Involve the city, town, or county attorney before the crisis occurs.

If an emergency order has been crafted by the attorney, enforcement then becomes an issue. This should include reviewing the rules of engagement immediately on an emergency being declared. The attorney as referee can intervene, provide counsel, and can up the odds that a crisis can be survived.

6. Early engagement of other stakeholders in the community also increases the capacity for a timely and effective response and even recovery to the tragedy.

Mary Suhm noted that the investment in developing relationships with the leadership in the local chapter of the Red Cross and other organizations dedicated to emergency assistance expedited the city's response to housing 8,000 people displaced by Hurricane Katrina. Tragedies take a heavy emotional toll on a community. Engaging religious and spiritual leaders in the planning and preparation for crises of any type extends the capacity to show compassion to a hurting community.

Eventually, the questioning will surface. Why was this tragedy not anticipated? Why the missteps in the response to the tragedy? The news media retraces each email or meeting. Decisions had to be made quickly and procedures had to be expedited. Strong support from a mayor, or the equivalent in county government, will mute much of the questioning.

Nevertheless, the staff, local lawmakers, and community look to the manager for reassurance and consolation. Following the destruction of her town of 25,000 by a wildfire, Lauren Gill acknowledged that “I’m here because I showed up every day, and did my job, and pushed for recovery until on some days it hurt.” A. C. Gonzalez added that “it comes back to basics—communicating, exercising our leadership muscles, showing compassion and empathy, but being efficient. Indeed, every day is a rehearsal for that big event.”

Conclusion

This article has explored the boundaries of the impact of community-wide tragedies on the careers of managers in local government. Although not yet subjected to the rigors of scientific analysis, the perception among managers, especially in disaster prone areas, is that tragedies often shorten their tenure with a city or county.

We conclude that no amount of good management can fully compensate for past negligence by a community to prepare for the possibility of a tragedy. However, managers can build a vibrant organizational culture that promotes trust among the staff and sustains their confidence in the manager’s leadership. Crises are professionally and personally exhausting. They also bring out the best in leaders. Ultimately, doing whatever it takes to meet the challenges of such events is what draws managers to this noble profession of public service. **PM**

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How Local Governments Can **Keep Firefighters Physically and Mentally Healthy**



ACTIONABLE STEPS TO REDUCE THE RISK OF CANCER AND THE STIGMA OF MENTAL HEALTH

BY PAUL LUIZZI, CFO, CPM

Goodyear, Arizona, is the ninth fastest-growing city in the country, and with this growth comes opportunities for the city to be creative and forward-thinking in how it keeps its firefighters safe.

I've lived and worked in Goodyear since 2007, and I've been the Goodyear Fire Chief since 2013. One of the main reasons my family and I moved from Massachusetts

to Goodyear was because the culture at the city of Goodyear resonated with me. The city focuses on providing exceptional customer service to the community through its six core values: adaptability, empathy, initiative, innovation, integrity, and optimism. These core values are further bolstered by the city's culture statement, "We care, we achieve, and we celebrate."

It's a cliché to say that actions speak louder than words, but in this case, it's true. The Goodyear City Council cares about all of the city's employees, and it places a high priority on funding public safety. As the fire chief, a high priority for me, with more than 110 firefighters on my watch, is to tap into the city's core values to keep my entire department as healthy as possible, both physically and mentally. I want our residents to know that when our firefighters show up, they're getting the best of the best.

Stopping Cancer Before It Starts

Cancer has become the number-one concern among firefighters as an occupational issue.¹ It's something I am all too familiar with as a first responder with more than 30 years of experience.

Within the span of just a couple of months in 2015, two Goodyear firefighters under the age of 40 were diagnosed with cancers that they got while working on the job serving others.

One of those firefighters is back on the truck and using his experience to lobby policymakers to change workers' compensation laws in Arizona. Unfortunately, the other firefighter lost his battle



the psychologist, we also have a chaplain, and the city offers a free employee assistance program that offers free, confidential assessment and counseling referrals.

Conclusion

The Goodyear Fire Department is fortunate to have the financial support and general approval of the Goodyear City Council and city leadership as we continue to seek ways to keep our firefighters safe. I know that not every department has this level of support, but in closing, here are my suggestions for what steps other agencies can take to keep their crews safe:

- Make all aspects of health a priority and model healthy behaviors to help influence your department.
- Do research to see what other departments are doing and brainstorm to see what you can implement in your stations.
- Request that your city leadership work with you to keep your crews as safe as possible. **PM**

Originally published in the ICMA Blog at <https://icma.org/blog-posts/how-local-governments-can-keep-firefighters-physically-and-mentally-healthy>.

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PAUL LUIZZI, CFO, CPM, is fire chief of Goodyear, Arizona.



to cancer, leaving behind a wife and two young daughters.

Goodyear has opened two brand new fire stations in the past 16 months, and we're currently designing another new station. Thanks to the city council's support and the city's focus on its core values, especially innovation, these new state-of-the-art stations keep our firefighters as safe as possible.

We prioritize decontamination. After a typical house or car fire, firefighters' equipment is covered in dangerous carcinogens.

In years past, it was a badge of honor to wear your equipment after a call, but we know better now. We hose off and scrub down everyone who was exposed to the smoke or fire before they leave the scene.

It is imperative that this is done before they remove their turnout gear completely and put it in specially designed compartments on our fire engines so they don't get contaminants inside the cab.

We specifically designed the new stations to keep the clean side of the station clean and carcinogen-free. When

firefighters return from a call, they immediately get their turnout gear and equipment washed in the extractor washers and then enter the decontamination corridor, where they get themselves cleaned up and ready for the next call. The Goodyear Fire Department is the first department in the Southwest United States to invest in Solo Rescue Decon Washers, which thoroughly clean firefighters' air tanks and face masks. We currently have them in three of our stations, and they are strategically placed throughout the city to allow firefighters based at every station across the city to use them.

We also have showers and regular laundry facilities on the decontamination side so they can hop in, get any contaminants off their skin, and throw their clothes in the wash, too. Finally, a vestibule separates the clean side of the station from the dirty side of the station.

It's OK to Not Be OK

The support that the Goodyear City Council provides to the

Goodyear Fire Department is critical for keeping our firefighters safe, and they don't strictly fund new buildings or trucks.

In 2016, the city received a federal grant to bring a psychologist on board for a year to help firefighters manage their mental health. She spent time building relationships and trust, and after the pilot year, the city council approved funding to continue this service to this day.

The psychologist is onsite one week a quarter, and she has created a trained peer support team to step in and help their brothers and sisters after a traumatic call when she can't be there.

Mental health is equally as important as physical health. Similar to how we used to continue to wear our turnout gear after a gritty call as a badge of honor, firefighters have traditionally bottled up their emotions after a traumatic call and tried to ignore them. We know now that that's not healthy, either, which is why I think it's so important that we have the funding to support mental health. In addition to

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The City Health Dashboard makes it simple for local leaders in the nation's 750+ largest cities to see where their cities or neighborhoods stand on over 40 key measures of health, such as diabetes and life expectancy, and on factors that shape health, such as housing affordability and child poverty. These kinds of data can uncover health challenges and the links between them. Users can compare their cities to others and learn how similar cities work to address their challenges.

The Dashboard's mission is to help local governments build healthier and more equitable communities by serving as a **FREE** one-stop data resource. Using the Dashboard, city leaders can:

- ▶ Pinpoint health challenges and wins
- ▶ Measure health and well-being over time
- ▶ Prioritize what needs to be achieved to build healthier, more equitable communities





Until We Find a Way to PREVENT Mass Shootings, YOUR CITY NEEDS TO PREPARE

BY SARAH C. PECK

The heartbreaking mass shootings in Uvalde and Buffalo have pushed gun violence to the top of our national agenda. As the White House and Congress search for ways to end the bloodshed, the unsettling fact remains that the burden of responding to a mass shooting falls largely on our cities. Yet unlike law enforcement officials, mayors and their city managers rarely

think about how they would respond to a mass shooting until tragedy strikes.

That's why, at the suggestion of then Pittsburgh Mayor Bill Peduto, who responded to the Tree of Life Synagogue shooting that killed eleven and wounded six people in 2018, the Public Health Advocacy Institute set out to research the role of the mayor when responding to a mass shooting. We researched six cities that had

responded to a mass shooting: El Paso, Dayton, Orlando, Parkland, Pittsburgh, and San Bernardino. We interviewed mayors, staff, law enforcement officials, representatives of the American Red Cross and the FBI Victims Services Division, and a city attorney. We used their harrowing but invaluable experience, combined with public health resources developed by the CDC, the FBI, and other federal

agencies, to develop tools for city officials: the Mass Shooting Protocol and the Mass Shooting Playbook (unitedonguns.org/protocol). The Mass Shooting Protocol is a four-page guide that mayors and their staff can turn to during the first 24 hours following a mass shooting.¹ The Mass Shooting Playbook is a 200-page supplemental resource that cities can use to prepare for, to respond to, and to help their communities recover from the unthinkable—a process that can go on for years.²

The Role of the City

The role of city leaders begins the moment the first shots are fired. Simply put, as law enforcement works to neutralize the threat, the mayor's office mobilizes to meet the needs of the city. Perhaps nothing provides a



A memorial to victims of the August 3, 2019 mass shooting in El Paso, Texas. Photo by Marcel Nothdurft.

better overview of the magnitude and complexity of the city's role than the Orlando Pulse nightclub shooting case brief, which can be found in the Playbook. City leaders must ensure unified and appropriate messaging, in coordination with law enforcement. They must ensure victims and families receive the comprehensive services and support they need, and plan for the long-term mental health needs of the community. They must ensure the city's response complies with the law, while mitigating legal exposure to lawsuits. And then they must figure out how to pay for the cost of the city's response.

Front and Center: Managing Crisis Communications

The community's urgent need for words of comfort after a tragedy is the reason Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer insisted on speaking first, before FBI officials, at the first press conference following the Pulse nightclub attack that killed 49 people and wounded 53 in 2016. As the principal elected representative and a trusted member of the community, the mayor is the "communicator-in-chief." The mayor should plan and participate in the press conferences. In consultation with law enforcement, the mayor (or the city's public information officer) should decide who will speak at the press conferences and who should not, about what, and for how long. Law enforcement officials typically provide details about the investigation, and the public looks to the mayor's office for public safety assurances, updates about the victims, referrals to mental health resources, and messages of healing and unity.

Managing communications during a crisis requires using trauma-informed messaging; public health officials should be consulted. Misinformation must be addressed by promptly correcting it when it occurs and by scheduling frequent press conferences even when there isn't much in the way of news to share. And the mayor's office must ensure unified messaging for the benefit of the community. As the National Police Foundation's after-action report noted, one city's lack of unified messaging created a vacuum filled by divisive messages that at times

The unsettling fact remains that the burden of responding to a mass shooting falls largely on our cities.



"overshadowed messages of unity and resilience, which also hampered the ability of the entire...community to focus on a collaborative recovery process."

The Playbook's Communications chapter provides strategies for managing the press, CDC resources for developing crisis communications, and protocols to manage social media and public records requests. Tips for managing a Presidential visit and other VIPs are included in Appendix B.

Top Priority: Providing Victims Services

Mayor Peduto's response to the Tree of Life shooting intuitively prioritized meeting the needs of the victims and family members. Such support usually starts by standing up a Family Reunification Center—a physical space to reunite friends

and family and to provide death notices and grief counseling for those who have lost their loved ones. Law enforcement typically establishes this center, but city leaders should step in to ensure its location is separate from the press center and the center has a secured perimeter to prevent the press from approaching grieving family members. City officials should also work with the coroner's office to expedite death notices. Applicable law can slow the process of informing families; such delay can be unnecessarily traumatizing.

The closure of that center is typically followed by the establishment of a Family Assistance Center to provide more comprehensive services to victims, families, and friends, including referrals to mental health care, legal services, victim compensation, help with funeral costs, childcare, and so on. Providing this broad range of services is a major undertaking for a mayor's office. Mayor and staff will have to leverage existing partnerships with community-based organizations and businesses, and request the support of victim advocates, the FBI, and the American Red Cross, among others. It is recommended, therefore, to cultivate those relationships before disaster strikes.

As many readers have felt after a horrifying mass shooting, the trauma is a significant, lasting public health problem. Trauma affects not only the victims and their families, but also first responders, journalists, members of the targeted community, and the staff at

city hall. It's usually up to city officials to find ways to address the trauma, often by organizing vigils and remembrance events, and by arranging long-term mental health services. The need for these critical services will continue for years, long after the nation has moved on. El Paso Mayor Margo's ability to establish a long-term Resiliency Center continues to be a key aspect of the recovery of his community following the Walmart shooting that killed 22 people and injured 26 in 2019, as described in the Playbook's El Paso case brief.

The Playbook highlights best practices for managing these support services in the Victim and Family Assistance chapter. The Mental Health chapter provides information and resources related to trauma recovery and community resilience. The chapter on Community Partnerships provides examples of how community and national partners supported cities' efforts to meet the needs of victims and families. The chapter on Commemorations provides guidance for commemorating the victims, planning permanent memorials, and preserving artifacts.

Appendix E provides additional resources prepared by the National Mass Violence Victimization Resource Center that can aid in the recovery of victims and families.

Preventing Fraud: Establishing the Victims Fund

After a mass shooting, the American people are moved to give. City officials should quickly establish an official victims fund to manage donations rather than allow private GoFundMe accounts

to collect them. Leadership on this issue can reduce the incidence of fraud and ensure donations are distributed properly among the victims and family members according to a distribution protocol established with their input. The city may consider using an existing 501(3)(c) charitable entity to establish this fund, as Orlando did, or partner with the National Compassion Fund or a trusted local charity to accept donations. Note that the families of victims from previous mass shootings strongly recommend that 100-percent of the donations be distributed to the survivors and families of victims. Best practices for managing the victims fund, as well as in-kind donations (such as food, teddy bears, and other tributes to the victims) and volunteers, can be found in the Managing Donations and Volunteers chapter.

Managing Potential Legal Risks

Another unsettling fact: a mass shooting usually results in lawsuits. Although no legal action brought against a city has been successful to date, the legal risks must be properly managed. The mayor should work with the "C4 team" (i.e., the chief of staff, city attorney, chief administrative officer, and chief financial officer or their functional equivalents) to manage legal issues that arise when a mass shooting takes place, such as public records requests, emergency declarations, mutual aid agreements, and lawsuits. The Playbook's chapter on Legal Considerations covers issues that should be reviewed and managed by the city's attorneys to reduce potential liability.

Finding Funds to Pay for the Response

The cost of responding to a mass shooting can be enormous. San Bernardino spent \$22.5 million after the December 2015 attack at the Inland Regional Center. But, according to its after-action report, the county was reimbursed only one-tenth of that figure. Appendix C: Funding Sources provides an overview of funding sources that cover victims crime compensation, family assistance and resiliency centers, police overtime and related law enforcement costs, and other aspects of the city's response.

City Officials Should Prepare for a Mass Shooting

After former Dayton Mayor Nan Whaley responded to a mass shooting in her city that killed nine people and wounded 17 in 2019, she

advised her fellow mayors, "It isn't if, but when. You need to prepare." Obviously, the first time a mayor or city manager thinks about how to respond to a mass shooting shouldn't be when a mass shooting is in progress. Just as law enforcement officials schedule active shooter exercises and schools schedule active shooter drills for students, city officials should plan the city's response by scheduling a tabletop exercise with appropriate staff, agencies, law enforcement officials, public health experts, and partners.

Conducting a tabletop can help prevent mistakes and aid in the recovery of the community. City officials can also highlight the proactive measures they are taking to reassure key constituents—including parents, the business community, and at-risk communities—that the city is doing everything possible to ensure it is well prepared in the event of an extreme emergency.

In consultation with Mayor Dyer's team, we have prepared a tabletop template for this purpose that can be adapted to meet your city's needs. We have also assembled training resources in Appendix A.

Planning for the Unthinkable: A School Mass Shooting

School shootings can be especially hard on city officials and their staff because they often know the victims and families involved. These shootings also present unique challenges because schools are usually governed and regulated by entities not under the control of the mayor. The school district, the county, the mayors of neighboring cities, and even the governor's office may compete to assume the lead during the response. Yet the compassionate leadership of trusted local officials is crucial during these



The role of city leaders begins the moment the first shots are fired.



Mourners gather at a memorial for victims of the October 1, 2017 mass shooting in Las Vegas, Nevada. Photo by Gian Sapienza.

tragic events, as the Parkland case brief makes clear.

Planning a tabletop exercise focused on a school shooting with the school district and other stakeholders is therefore crucial to clarify roles, especially for small cities that lack the staff and resources of large cities. The School Shootings chapter contains best practices and resources specific to school shootings, including school security considerations and student mental health and wellness.

A Word about Community Gun Violence

Our research focused on the role of cities when responding to an active shooter who conducts a violent rampage in a public place. These shooters are often hate-filled and aggrieved, making their crimes hard to predict and prevent. That's why preparedness is so important.

Far more common are mass shootings that occur in specific areas of city neighborhoods plagued by gun violence, often

underserved Black and brown communities. Leaders of large cities are familiar with these types of mass shootings, often referred to as community gun violence. These shootings rarely receive national attention or resources, yet the community trauma caused by these shootings is the same. The deaths are equally tragic. Therefore, many of the best practices offered in the Playbook apply to these mass shootings as well.

In this regard, Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg's response to a gang-related shooting that killed six people and injured twelve others in April 2022 is especially noteworthy.³ He appropriately called it a mass shooting. He used trauma-informed messaging, promptly identified the victims, conveyed messages of unity and healing, and highlighted the need for increased mental health resources and funding. The Playbook's Note about

Community Gun Violence provides recommendations and resources city officials can use to prevent and respond to these tragedies.

Free Resources for Mayors and City Managers

The Mass Shooting Playbook and Protocol, the case briefs, and the tabletop template are available for use by city officials without charge on our website (UnitedOnGuns.org). As Heather Fagan, chief of staff to Orlando Mayor Buddy Dyer, has noted, these resources are applicable to extreme emergencies in addition to mass shootings, such as terror attacks, wildfires and other natural disasters, and a building collapse, such as the one that occurred in Surfside, Florida.

The Public Health Advisory Institute (PHAI) is located at Northeastern University School of Law. Its nonpartisan initiative UnitedOnGuns promotes public health approaches to

reduce gun violence, while respecting the rights of responsible gun owners. For more information about our work or for referrals to resources and training, please contact Sarah C. Peck at s.peck@phaionline.org or visit UnitedOnGuns.org. **PM**

ENDNOTES AND RESOURCES

¹ <https://secureservercdn.net/72.167.242.48/o06.475.myftpupload.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Mass-Shooting-Protocol.pdf?time=1653401816>

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³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2022_Sacramento_shooting

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Turning Fort Knox into the Army's Energy Powerhouse Post-Crisis

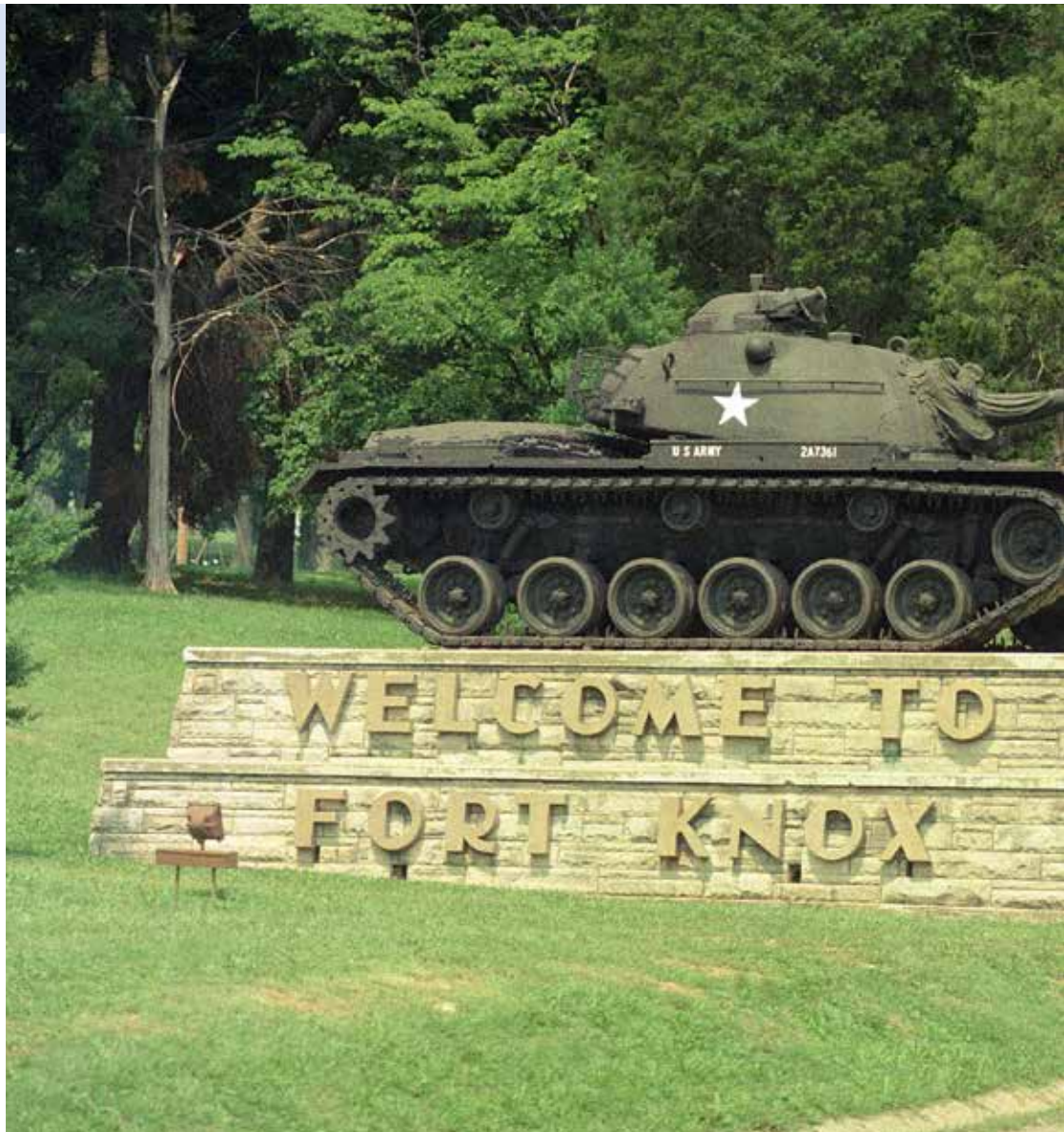
When Fort Knox and the surrounding communities were caught off guard and unprepared for a 2009 storm, leadership vowed to never allow such a crisis to happen again.

BY COL LANCE A. O'BRYAN, JAIME MEYERS, EMILY DE ROSA

Despite having close ties to their surrounding community, military installations often themselves function like small cities. Within the Department of Defense (DOD), Fort Knox, Kentucky, is a uniquely capable installation that even has the ability to produce its own power and water. The installation is the foundation for military readiness and resilient infrastructure, ensuring our forces are ready when called upon. Fort Knox learned the hard way in regard to resilience, but has emerged as a leader within the DOD.

The Storm

The energy program did not become a success overnight. The 2009 Ohio Valley Ice Storm challenged the installation in every possible way. Buildings went without power and water for up to 10 days, while over 609,000 of our neighbor's homes and business across the state were





Fort Knox Energy Bunker Control Room

independent power. Not only did the storm serve as a driving factor in installing better energy systems, but it opened leadership's eyes to cost-saving capabilities tied to energy improvement. The Fort Knox Energy Security Project was then established and focused on resilience in energy and water infrastructure.

Struggle to Strategy

From this initial emergency plan and the development of the Fort Knox Energy Security Project, the energy and water programs have become a singular line of effort within our overall installation strategy. This strategy helps to focus our investment in utility infrastructure for near-, mid-, and long-term objectives and allows for continuous system improvement, while balancing competing demands across the installation in a resource-constrained environment.

Currently, Fort Knox has the ability to integrate alternative forms of energy production, including geothermal and solar, while also being able to harvest natural gas from wells on the installation. To test the efficiency of these energy systems, the Black Start Exercise (BSE) was established as a biannual requirement to ensure Fort Knox's energy generation system is prepared to handle all crises when disconnected from outside power. At the conclusion of our latest BSE, we found that over the course of 8+ hours, our systems were able to produce enough energy to power two Fort Knox-sized loads.

The Power of Partnerships

Critical to the success of our energy and water programs are partnerships with Nolin Rural Electric Cooperative (Nolin RECC), Hardin County Water District (HCWD) 1 and 2, and the continuous engagement with local, state, and federal leaders. These partnerships allow Fort Knox to

Not only did the storm serve as a driving factor in installing better energy systems, but it opened leadership's eyes to cost-saving capabilities tied to energy improvement.

without power. Fort Knox was caught completely off guard and unprepared. Leadership at that time vowed to never allow a crisis of this type to reoccur. With that decision came the need for a surge of installation-wide strategic thinking focusing on energy and infrastructure resilience.

Never Again

Because this was an "all hands on deck" situation, leadership had to be re-synced. Early action included a 90-day emergency plan, including guidance calling for a minimum of 14 days of installation





maintain high-class energy and water programs. Recently, and in conjunction with HCWD 1, the Muldraugh Water Treatment Plant underwent \$15 million in renovations and now has the capability of producing 7.2 million gallons of water per day. Our partnership with Nolin RECC has seen our electric bill slashed in half, with a realized annual savings of almost \$8 million. In January, our energy utility partnership with Nolin RECC was recognized with the 2021 Army Partnership Award.

We also recently hosted a contingent from the University of Kentucky that lost a research facility in December 2021 due to a tornado. We provided them a tour of our facilities, discussed our capabilities, and reviewed how to integrate infrastructure and energy resiliency into new construction.

Fort Knox in the Army Spotlight

Just as the energy savings continue, so do the awards for the Fort Knox energy program. In 2021, Fort Knox received a Secretary of the Army Award for its all-LED lighting project on Godman Army Airfield,



Decentralized Energy System

the only one of its kind in the Army. Furthermore, Fort Knox has received 13 Army-level awards in the past 15 years. Outside of the Army, Fort Knox has ranked sixth on the Environmental Protection Agency's "Top Small Cities," housing more than 50 buildings with a national Energy Star certification.

Energy Moving Forward

Shooting for the stars is what brought Fort Knox to be an energy, water, and infrastructure resilient installation, so the stars remain

the goal. Our strategy has allowed us to understand and develop the way forward for greater resiliency. Some of the items that we have identified and tied to near-, mid-, and long-term objectives are as follows:

1. Continue to aim for 100-percent LED lighting.
2. A requirement for a battery energy storage system to store excess energy from our 2.1MW solar array.
3. Remove any remaining diesel burning emergency back-up generators from the system.

4. Installation reliance on its own microgrid.

Conclusion

We, as a human population, have attached a predominantly negative connotation to the word "failure." That, however, should not be the case. Failure comes bearing its tests and begs us to struggle, but what a better way to find out how to succeed. Fort Knox's award-winning energy program, born of failure, continues to be a leader in the DOD. **PM**



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How to Get Your First Job in Local Government

BY JEANNETTA MAXENA

Advice from someone who has been through the process recently and wants to help others kickstart their local government career

The musings of the great resignation coupled with the large numbers of boomers retiring has created an environment where we often see professionals announce on social media that they are starting a new position. This may cause great worry to some, or it may motivate others to seek out better opportunities. You may wonder how you could break into local government and get your dream job working in city hall and giving back to the community, but it's not always easy—some entry-level positions ask for a minimum of three years of experience. Here is my advice.

During my second year of the master's in public administration program at the University of Central Florida, I began to apply for local government jobs with the titles of "analyst," "assistant to the," and "neighborhood services coordinator." After submitting dozens of applications with no job in sight, I applied for administrative assistant jobs, but I still did not receive an opportunity. So I embarked upon one of the most significant decisions in my life: applying to the ICMA Local Government Management Fellowship (LGMF).

The LGMF provides recent graduates of MPA/MPP programs with little to no experience in local government the opportunity to have a full-time position in a municipality, dedicated mentorship, and paid registration to both the ICMA annual and regional conferences. The premise of the program is to recruit talented individuals to fill the void of job loss in local government and to launch passionate professionals into local government management positions.

During my fellowship at the city of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, I learned how to manage programs and I used that experience to

secure a permanent position in local government as the assistant to the city manager for the city of Mary Esther, Florida.

I realize that there are a lot of public service professionals or recent graduates looking to get into local government and wanting to find their first job in local government management. Some may already have a job but are seeking the next rung on the ladder toward becoming a city manager. Remember, public service careers are like a jungle gym and not a ladder. However, it has been noted in an earlier article ([icma.org/careers-local-government-management](https://www.icma.org/careers-local-government-management)) that the typical hierarchy in the manager's office is as follows:

- City/county manager (CAO).
- Assistant/deputy CAO.
- Assistant to the CAO.
- Management analyst.
- Management intern or management fellow.

This year, I had the pleasure to serve on the Task Force to Update the ICMA Job Hunting Handbook. This committee is comprised of local government professionals in various stages of their career. I am honored to give my feedback as an entry-level local government professional. I am also a former public-school teacher and I learned after meeting multiple former teachers who now work in local government that we make excellent local government employees. Professionals who are trying to break into the field often are seeking positions as a management analyst or an assistant to the city manager.

Highly Sought-After Entry-Level Positions

- **Management Analyst:** The management analyst position is thought of as entry level, but most municipalities require some experience in local government. Often the minimum education and experience that is required is three years at the bachelor's degree level or one year of experience and a master's degree. Also, the management analyst duties vary throughout the country. In many states like Florida, the management analyst is synonymous with budget analyst. Still, in other places, management analysts manage programs, perform complicated research and data analysis, and

complete special projects for different departments like the city manager's office, human resources department, and parks and recreation department to name a few. Many management analysts work closely with their city manager.

- **Assistant to the City Manager/CAO:** The assistant to the city manager is often a mid-level manager position where the professional reports directly to the city manager. This position works on special projects and may oversee a department, especially in smaller organizations. There are assistant to the city manager professionals who also serve as the economic development manager, human resources manager, real estate administrator, and more. The position is versatile and may be required to help with the municipality's budget, communications, or recruitment. The person in the "assistant to the" position will have a lot of responsibility and the position is distinguished from the executive assistant role because it requires the individual to work on high-level projects that require complex analysis and decision-making skills.

Stay Visible

If you want the next job opportunity, you must remain visible in the local government community. This may mean having

memberships in professional associations/organizations, which often give students and early career professionals a discounted rate. I left feeling revitalized after attending last year's ICMA Annual Conference and an NFBPA South Florida Chapter social. Events like these give local government professionals an opportunity to connect with other people who are passionate about public service.

I recently attended the 2022 Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) conference, and the experience was life changing. I was inspired to continue my pursuit of becoming a city manager after attending a pre-conference session titled, "So You're Going to Be a City/County Manager." I made so many connections with people in every level of the field, including city managers and early career professionals like myself.

Professional Associations

- International City/County Management Association (ICMA)
- Engaging Local Government Leaders (ELGL)
- National Forum for Black Public Administrators (NFBPA)
- Local Government Hispanic Network (LGHN)
- The League of Women in Government
- International Network of Asian Public Administrators (I-NAPA)



Ways to Stay Visible

- Create a LinkedIn profile and post regularly.
- Attend professional conferences and networking mixers.
- Join a committee within ICMA.
- Write an article and submit it for publication consideration by a professional organization like ICMA or ELGL.
- Participate in webinars with ICMA or your state organization, such as FCCMA.

Joining committees and participating in webinars are professional development experiences that can be used on a resume when applying for entry-level positions. Holding professional memberships will give you an opportunity to connect with other people who are passionate about public service.

Resume

I had the privilege of helping my organization interview candidates, and I can certainly say that a bad resume can ruin your chance of getting hired. Many recruiters understand that recent graduates do not have a significant amount of experience, but they still expect for you to have at least one internship that has lasted for a minimum of four months or a full semester.

- Resumes should be organized in chronological order and your work experience should be easy to find.
- Leave out the fluff. Do not include information that is not relevant to the job you are applying for.
- Resumes should show that you are dependable and trustworthy.
- Be clear on when you received or are expecting to earn a degree.

Cover Letter

The cover letter can be just as important as the resume. This will give you the opportunity to explain why you want the job and why you are the perfect pick for the position. Some recruiters were not interested in my background as an educator, but those that found my past career as a teacher as worthy were the ones that offered me the job.

- Use meaningful, thoughtful, and expressive language in your cover letter.
- Relay a time that you helped someone.
- Discuss why you are choosing a career in public service or local government and why you want to work for that municipality.
- Remember to discuss what you bring to table and all relevant career information.

Job Search

I had experience in neighborhood relations and community engagement, so I sought positions such as neighborhood relations coordinator and management analyst. I knew I did not want to work entirely in budget, but management analyst positions that were not primarily focused on budget were hard to come by. I discussed this with my coach through ICMA Coach Connect (<https://icma.org/1-1-coaching>) and she mentioned that city managers are generalists who are versatile and experts in multiple areas of local government. I realized in that moment that I wanted to work as an assistant to the city manager and I



wanted to learn as much as I could about local government while working under the direct leadership of a city manager.

After this epiphany, I narrowed my job search to assistant to the city manager roles and used sites such as governmentjobs.com, icma.org/job-listings, fccma.org/jobs, and Google searches. I applied for about six assistant to the city manager positions, interviewed for three of those positions, and accepted the position with the city of Mary Esther. The process of applying, interviewing, and being placed in a position took five months, so I recommend applying to jobs at the start of your second year in the MPA program. People who have already began a career in local government as an intern, fellow, or administrative assistant should start applying when they gain at least six months of continuous work experience.

Resilience

Searching, crafting resumes and cover letters for each position you apply to, interviewing, and waiting require you to be resilient. You will receive more no's than yeses, but you must bounce back each time and continue your mission of public service. Allow your passion for helping others drive your pursuit of finding a job opportunity. Even if you have a bad interview, let it be a learning lesson for the next interview. While interviewing, remember that you are also interviewing the community, so ask questions about the job. Go to the job and meet the people to get a good sense of a positive work environment or a toxic work environment. We are living in an era scarred by COVID-19 and the world around us has changed. We must be adaptable and willing to take on new challenges. The road ahead may seem tough, but it will get better. You will get your foot in the door and even if it is not your dream job, it will be the start of something great. **PM**

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Six Tips for Success as You Take the Next Step in Your Career

Some reminders that have helped me stay on course in both my professional and personal life | BY CLAIRE JUBB

When I look back at my career and look forward to the future, I have learned many things and I know I am going to learn many more. But, when I speak to others about how I manage or juggle or develop my career, I find myself leaning on a few helpful sayings that I have nicknamed my “six sayings for success.”

1. Accept Who You Are.

By this I mean take the time to really understand who you are and embrace that as part of you. Trying to change or make yourself something you are not will do you a disservice in the long run. I, for example, am naturally a shy person. Those who know me in my work life will be surprised by that; those who know me personally won't be—I hide it well when I have to. I don't naturally insert myself into conversations and I find networking hard, but knowing that has allowed me to develop tactics and behavior to overcome my challenges. For example, before I go into a room where I know I will need to network, I give myself a mental pep talk. I remind myself that I've been included in this group because I have something to offer and people are going to be interested in what I have to say.

2. Take Ownership of Your Skills.

You haven't gotten this far in your career without having some skills and abilities. Whatever those skills are, own them and be proud of them. Some people find it very difficult to accept praise (me included), but praise is simply recognition that you are doing great at what you know. Don't downplay your skills. If you are good at something, own it. Stand up and say you are good at something. False modesty isn't going to get you anywhere.

3. If You Don't Ask, You Don't Get.

This is probably the one thing I say more than anything else. No one is going to hand you anything if they don't know you want it. You may think that the world revolves around you and that you are in everyone's thoughts, but that's simply not true! If you don't put yourself forward, don't apply for the job, don't ask for the pay increase, etc., then don't expect to get it. You have to be responsible for your own progress and you can only do that by asking for what you want. This goes hand in hand with a fear of rejection. You are not always going to get what you want, but if you don't get past that fear and put yourself in the



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running, then you don't stand a chance. There is incredible strength in taking risks where you may not succeed, but you may just succeed after all and imagine how great it would be if you do!

4. Accomplish One Thing Every Day.

However you manage your daily tasks or to-do list, the busier you get and the more you progress in your career, the less time you will have to accomplish all your tasks. As a student that saw the word "conscientious" crop up on report cards at school, I find it difficult to leave tasks outstanding, but I have had to train myself to accept that if I can knock one item off my task list every day, I'm doing OK. It's all about setting expectations for yourself that are realistic and achievable and not setting yourself up for failure.

5. Trust Your Instincts.

This is a hard one and one that takes time and experience to work up to. It's only by learning from mistakes that you will really learn to trust your instincts. I have learned from experience that when I second guess myself and do something that doesn't follow my first instinct, I usually end up regretting it. I have learned over the years to try to ignore that voice that is telling me to change

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my mind, that my first instinct isn't the right one and that I should listen to my gut. I even go as far as quickly hitting send on an email to lock my decision in so I don't have the ability to second guess myself. Figure out what works for you and learn to trust your own instincts.

6. Have Fun!

We spend more time awake at work than we do at home, so we need to have fun. I'm a firm believer that when something stops being fun, it's time for a change. Work is meant to be challenging and we all know that we work under more and more pressure these days, and need a release, but we are responsible for how we approach our personal and professional lives. There is nothing that makes me happier than to walk out and see an employee laughing with a customer or my staff with smiles on their faces. That's when I know I'm doing an OK job.

Those are my six tips for success that I use to frame both my work and my non-work life. I hope this has given you some ideas or even the idea to think about what mottos or sayings help you along the way. **PM**

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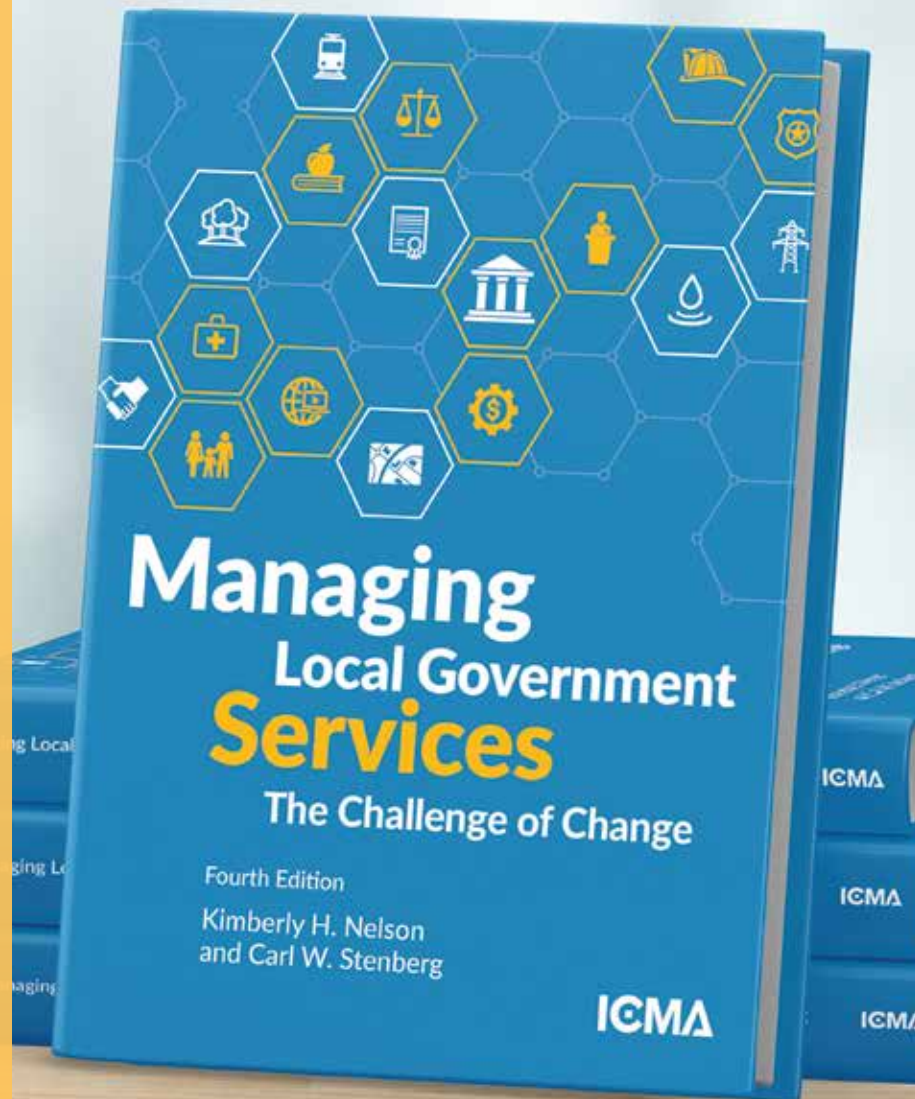
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Colerain Township Quick Response Team

Implementing collaboration across emergency response teams to respond to increased overdose rates

Colerain Township, Ohio—2020 Recipient, Program Excellence Award, Community Health and Safety (50,000 and Greater Population)

Throughout the early 2010s, Colerain Township saw a drastic increase in overdoses related to heroin and opioids. At the time, Greater Cincinnati was quickly becoming a face of the opioid epidemic, and Colerain Township was feeling the effects.

Overdoses more than tripled from 2011 to 2016. The loss of life and toll on families, emergency responders, and the community were reaching an all-time high. In addition to the increases in addiction and overdoses, the township was experiencing an uptick in addiction-related criminal activity, particularly property crimes.

At this juncture, township leaders recognized that while they could not control whether or not someone takes a drug, they could control the availability of resources to help someone break the cycle of addiction. They identified a “golden second” in which people who suffer from addiction are ready for help and treatment. However, people who need help often hit a roadblock because they lack resources, and frequently they are reluctant to seek help from the local government for fear of being judged

or arrested. This understanding prompted the creation of a Quick Response Team (QRT) to help bring resources directly to an individual’s doorstep.

Colerain Township implemented the QRT in July 2015. The team includes members of the Fire Department, Police Department, and local Addiction Services Council. Within a few days of an overdose incident, a police officer, a specially trained tactical medic, and a licensed substance abuse counselor follow up with an individual in his or her home. Each member of the team has a slightly different role:

- The officer focuses on providing a safe environment for the team and leads any investigations into the criminal aspects of the overdose, such as the illegal drug supply.
- The paramedic assists with any health-related issues and helps family members understand how to care for a person who overdoses. Members of the team carry Narcan (a medication that reverses an opioid overdose) at all times.
- The substance abuse counselor helps the individual understand the challenges ahead and provides help navigating the steps to entering a treatment facility.

Since its inception, the QRT has responded to more than 1,050 incidents, and 80 percent of individuals contacted by the QRT have entered treatment. These numbers are accompanied by decreases in crime, morbidity, and mortality associated with addiction, mental trauma, and call volume for public safety responders. QRT also has increased community engagement and trust.

The township quickly discovered that it could do even more. In 2018, Colerain implemented a Safe Station program through which individuals or their family members can show up at any of the five fire stations and request help for any type of addiction. Team members then help connect them with a substance abuse counselor and treatment.

The township’s assistant fire chief, a champion of the program, best describes why this program works: “The QRT works because it’s a community-based approach. That’s its magic. You cross paths with those you’ve helped because you live in the same community they do. That’s a huge win for everyone.” **PM**



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Roger Kemp's background and professional skills are highlighted on his website. Dr. Kemp was a city manager in politically, economically, socially, and ethnically diverse communities.

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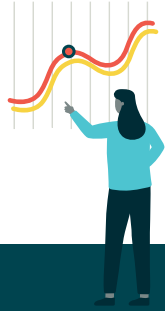
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Donna Gayden

City Manager
Long Beach, New York
ICMA Member since 2011

Turning the City's Credit Rating Around

The city of Long Beach hired me to come in for six to nine months to help them do a balanced, more realistic budget because they were having issues with budgeting, including borrowing money for payouts and everyday expenses. Of course, the Moody's ratings were down, so as we moved forward, we balanced out the budget and Moody's saw that we were trying to go in a more positive direction. So, instead of having a Baa3 with a negative outlook, we ended up getting a Baa3 with a positive outlook.

"Long Beach Was the #1 Most Fiscally Stressed City in the Entire State of New York."

That is not where you want to be on such a list. I can say proudly today we are no longer on the list as being significantly financially stressed. We took a hard look at everything; we knew we had to do some cutting and we did some basic cutting by starting a procurement team. You'll be surprised how people cut back on their spending when they know that others are looking at it, especially folks from other departments. We're turning the financials around, we have balanced budgets, and the city no longer borrows for their payouts.

How to Make a More Meaningful Impact on the Community You Serve

You need to look at ICMA and look to your fellow members at ICMA. Don't be afraid to go out and ask for others' opinions or advice. Don't try to create a play book right off the bat; take a look at what is already out there and talk to others on how it can be done. A lot of governments are struggling right now, and I think that the managers and even the councils need to reach out to other members to get advice on the best way to address those issues.

"ICMA Helps Me a Lot!"

I read the SmartBrief that comes through every day, and I always go down to the bottom of the page where you can get those free newsletters. One I just got was about how to avoid burnout. I'm sharing that with my executive team because at some point, especially during these hard past couple of years, it's easy to become burnt out. So, that will be in my "tool shed" from now on, and there are so many resources on the ICMA website that you can take advantage of as well.



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