



PUBLIC MANAGEMENT



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Kelsee Jordan Lee, CEcD
Planning & Economic
Development Director
Cibolo, Texas
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Inspiring Leaders *and* Innovative Communities

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ICMA Awards Reflect Outstanding Local Government Leadership This and Every Year

BY MARC A. OTT

Award-winning “case studies” point to creative solutions.

I am often asked by students and professionals just beginning their careers for advice. The questions range from which books to read and courses to take, as well as how to get that first door-opening experience. One of the best resources they can access is ICMA's Local Government Excellence Awards. The 2023 award winners—including in this month's PM Magazine and presented at the ICMA Annual Conference in Austin, Texas—demonstrate so many of both the practical and more abstract talents required to succeed in the profession of local government management. Consistent with years past, the Awards Evaluation Committee, under the leadership of Carlos Baia, city manager of Temple Terrace, Florida, has produced essentially a roster of case studies in outstanding leadership and management.

In the program awards, you'll find brilliant ideas on tapping into local expertise as the city of Oriental, North Carolina, did when confronted with a daunting shoreline restoration project, or as Cassopolis, Michigan, did in

getting all its stakeholders engaged in a reimagination process. You will discover new ways of involving your residents as Kalispell, Montana, did when it transformed an industrial-oriented area into a vibrant, pedestrian, mixed-use neighborhood with amenities to complement the historic downtown.

Every local government manager faces what are known as wicked problems—the kind that are seemingly unsolvable—yet Duarte, California, is making progress in reducing gang violence that has existed in the community for generations. El Paso County is creating all-abilities playgrounds to provide a safe and accessible space for every child, including those with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, as well as those with sensory processing issues. To address challenges in the local government workplace, Rancho Cucamonga, California, has set up a program to assist employees with short-term or immediate dependent care needs, which could otherwise result in their missing work.



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Management Association

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ICMA

**Creating and Supporting
Thriving Communities**

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 13,000 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.

In addition, the professional awards highlight career achievements that feature creativity and innovation. Every one of this year's recipients appears to be focused on "paying it forward" by nurturing the next generation, whether they are a 50-year local government leader like Mark Johnson or an early-career rock star like Kelsee Jordan Lee. In addition to the hard work of growing their communities, they make time to grow this profession through engagement with ICMA and their state associations and by mentoring others.

I would be remiss if I did not mention this year's Distinguished Service Award recipients—Pam Brangaccio, Bob O'Neill Jr., Kim Payne, and Sheryl Sculley—all of whom are exceptional leaders and trail blazers in many ways. Bob, in fact, blazed a trail for me here at ICMA as my immediate predecessor. If you consider the 108-year history of ICMA, there have been only six CEOs/executive directors, and Bob built on the success of those predecessors taking ICMA in exciting new directions. Above all, I have found Bob to be the consummate strategic thinker who graciously shares his

experience and insights with others as he did at ICMA and he now does in his academic affiliations.

I offer my congratulations to all of those who will be recognized in Austin, whether it be for years of service, outstanding programs, or individual achievements. Your dedication and integrity are shining examples for students and experienced professionals alike. I know I speak for the entire ICMA team when I say that we are fully committed to continuing to create the kind of environment that fosters achievement. **PM**

**I offer my
congratulations
to all of those who
will be recognized in
Austin, whether it be
for years of service,
outstanding programs,
or individual
achievements.**

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We wouldn't be here without ICMA.

ICMA is the reason we exist today. We first partnered with ICMA over 50 years ago to fulfill a vision of providing portable retirement plans to city and county managers. Our commitment to ICMA and the public sector continues to be as strong as ever, and we are proud to have helped over 3 million public employees retire well.

We value our partnership and look forward to serving the ICMA family for the next 50 years and beyond.

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Announcing the 2023–2024 Class of the Leadership Institute on Race, Equity, and Inclusion

A partnership between ICMA, the Kettering Foundation, and the National Civic League



As a thought leader, ICMA is committed to creating and supporting thriving communities. As part of this commitment, ICMA has created—in partnership with the Kettering Foundation and the National Civic League—the Leadership Institute on Race, Equity, and Inclusion.

The institute supports the ICMA Executive Board's statement regarding systemic racism, and more specifically, the commitment to “engage our members and partners in a process of listening to understand what our profession needs in order to deliver on the work of our mission and vision through the lens of equity and inclusion.”

The institute takes local government participants on a 12- to 18-month journey of interactive learning, networking with colleagues, and engaging discussions of the key leadership issues surrounding racial equity.

ICMA is committed to mitigating the effects of bias in the profession, ensuring that ICMA membership is inclusive and mirrors the diversity in communities, and making certain that local government professionals can look to ICMA for tools and resources to assist in their own community equity programming. To learn more about ICMA's commitment to race, equity and social justice, visit icma.org/race-equity-and-social-justice.

Join us in welcoming these participants who have been selected as the fellows of the class of 2023–2024:



Heather Abrams
Town Manager
Fairfax, California



Mike Land, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Coppell, Texas



Dr. Scott Andrews, ICMA-CM
Assistant City Manager
Bakersfield, California



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Wichita State University, Kansas

Michael Jones
County Administrator
Island County, Washington

More Than Words: Your Communications Are a Reflection of Your Leadership

BY JESSICA COWLES

Navigating **ethical communication** with the help of Tenet 9

Much has changed in the world and in the local government management profession in the 50 years since members voted to approve Tenet 9 on communications. This language reflected norms in 1972, when many technological advances like social media were still very far away!

In our most recent Code of Ethics efforts, ICMA membership recommended reviewing Tenets 1, 4, 9, and 11 of the Code through the lens of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Nearly three years of feedback on the Code culminated with 84% of voting members approving changes to the tenet language. This election had the distinction of having the highest participation rate in ICMA's online voting history with over 2,500 or 32% of membership casting a vote.

Tenet 9 is about active engagement and constructive communication, ensuring that all members of a community have a voice in the governance process and the opportunity to be heard. This principle in the Code builds and maintains public trust and confidence through professional management practices that enhance a member's communications.

Engaging Face to Face

As a leader in your community, you have visibility within the office and likely when you go about your personal life as well. You may think you're only running into the store to get a few groceries until a volunteer member on your city's arts commission wants to know what is happening with a particular project. Perhaps you needed this time away from the office to decompress from the rigors of the position, but now unwillingly find yourself a conversation where you must choose your words carefully.

This profession means life in a fishbowl and frustration can be apparent in your communications. Set limitations on when you are available to engage in person, enlist your deputy for assistance (it's excellent for their professional development, too), and stick to those boundaries even if it results in some discomfort.

Social Media: Friend, Foe, or Somewhere in Between

A manager's professional and personal actions can be closely scrutinized, so when it comes to social media, it's crucial to get it right. Ultimately, your social media activity can impact public trust and confidence.



Keep your responses professional and cordial. Replying to a resident's controversial social media post in a sarcastic way may feel good in the moment, but you'll feel differently when you or the organization experience the subsequent fallout. A screenshot of your post is easily saved, and it can unfortunately come up at an inopportune time, even if your better judgement prevails and you delete the post.

This can become an ethics issue. ICMA's ethics enforcement process requires a written narrative with documentation (such as a screenshot) that supports the allegation from the complainant's viewpoint. If the facts demonstrate that a member's social media conduct was inappropriate, ICMA may issue a censure. For more information regarding censures, each year the ethics program shares an annual report available at icma.org/page/enforcing-icma-code-ethics.

Use Tenet 9 as Your Guide

Tenet 9 serves as a guide for your individual conduct and provides a starting point for your organization's social media policy. The following list of questions and best practices can help operationalize this tenet language:

- How do you advance the cause of keeping the community informed, encourage communication, ensure engagement, and eliminate barriers in the governance process?
- Are your communications equal in tone regardless of whether it is an easy or difficult conversation? Do you "play favorites"?
- Is the organization's social media policy embedded within a personnel manual? Does this merit a stand-alone policy?



JESSICA COWLES
is ethics director
at ICMA
(jcowles@icma.org).

Tenet 9 of the ICMA Code of Ethics

This revised Tenet 9 language now reads: "Keep the community informed on local government affairs. Encourage and facilitate active engagement and constructive communication between community members and all local government officials."

The board added a guideline on engagement to Tenet 9 in June 2023 for members to help understand their ethical obligations relative to this language: "Members should ensure community members can actively engage with their local government as well as eliminate barriers and support involvement of the community in the governance process."

- How is elected official social media use governed or handled?
- Does your community have a public information officer (PIO) or a position that functions as a PIO? Is this position better equipped to respond when needed and take initiative to post to your organization's social media account?
- Are your employees aware of a member's commitment to ethics and why this is important along with good customer service principles?
- At the federal level, there is the Freedom of Information Act. What state or local laws exist to ensure social media communications are captured and provided in results for requests?
- Be civil and clear whether you are expressing your personal opinion or speaking on behalf of the organization.
- Regardless of privacy settings, social media can be very public. If you pause before responding to someone offline, think twice about making the

comment online where it can live on permanently.

- There are so many types of social media. Perhaps you have individuals you connect with on professional platforms that should not be in your circle on platforms you use on a more casual basis.

When ethical practices can be implemented in the organization (as outlined in Tenet 9 and its guideline), social media can be an efficient communications tool. Be cautious as social media can be fast-paced and postings (both words and images) may be misrepresented or misinterpreted from the way they were intended. However, your community needs, wants, and deserves timely communication from their local government, so don't hold back from using social media responsibly to share information.

Reach out to me at jcowles@icma.org to share your successes or seek advice on this thorny issue for you and your organization. **PM**

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ChatGPT: What You Need to Know

Harnessing the potential and mitigating the risks of this powerful new tool. | BY MARK L. RYCKMAN, ICMA-CM

By now, you may have heard about one of the latest advancements in artificial intelligence, ChatGPT (chat.openai.com). It is a large language model created by OpenAI, an artificial intelligence company. The software can answer questions, write text, and create content in an interactive fashion similar to having a conversation. It pulls information from across the internet and repackages it for your use.

You can use it to assist you in writing press releases, drafting procedures, or even putting together a request for proposals. Although the program is powerful, the user interface is simple. You interact with ChatGPT through a chatbot in a conversational manner, giving it instructions and waiting for an answer. As an example, when instructed, “Explain the council-manager form of government. The answer should not exceed five sentences,” ChatGPT quickly generated the following response:

The council-manager form of government is a system in which a governing body, known as the council or board, is responsible for making policy decisions and setting goals for a municipality or organization. The council appoints a professional manager to oversee the day-to-day operations and implement the council’s directives. The manager is hired based on qualifications and experience, rather than through political appointment. This model aims to separate political decision-making from administrative functions and ensure professional expertise in managing public affairs. The council retains ultimate authority, while the manager provides administrative leadership and expertise.

Uses in Local Government

ChatGPT offers enormous benefits for local government operations, but poses some risks. There are a variety of potential ways to integrate ChatGPT into your organization. It is most suitable for routine or automated processes, such as responding to resident inquiries. It can be used for more complex tasks such as conducting research and drafting reports. However, the more subjective or complex the issue, the more the author will need to evaluate ChatGPT responses carefully and edit them thoroughly to ensure the

final product is accurate. It is important to remember that ChatGPT is not a substitute for experience and human judgement, but can be a useful aid to assist in processing work more quickly. It is best used to write first drafts. Here are some examples of how ChatGPT can be used on the job.

Writing Correspondence:

This is one of the most basic uses of ChatGPT. You can ask it to draft correspondence for you such as emails, memos, and letters. You simply instruct ChatGPT in the prompt to write the desired correspondence and tell it to include any additional information such as the subject, recipient, and any other details you want added. You can refine the text yourself or continue to have a conversation with ChatGPT to clarify specific areas of its response.

Drafting Requests for Proposals and Reviewing Responses:

ChatGPT can quickly provide you with the framework for issuing a request for proposals (RFP). You can instruct ChatGPT to provide an outline of the RFP and then continue making requests to build upon each section, such as the project description, scope of work, instructions for submitting proposals, and evaluation guidelines. ChatGPT won’t write an RFP that is ready to issue, but it will accelerate the process to produce your documents.

Using the subscription version of ChatGPT, you can upload documents for review, such as the proposals submitted in response to your RFP. This can be done by subscribing to the more advanced version of ChatGPT using the upgrade link. Once you subscribe to this service, you can use various plug-ins, which are enhanced features. There are a few plug-ins that will allow you to upload documents to ChatGPT. Once uploaded, ChatGPT can rapidly conduct an initial review and identify main points such as key personnel, project approach, proposed timeline, deliverables, and cost.

Analyzing Financial Documents: Using the upgraded version of ChatGPT and a plug-in to upload documents, you can conduct initial analysis of financial documents such as budgets and financial statements. This is an easy way to quickly summarize information from various pages

ChatGPT offers enormous benefits for local government operations, but poses some risks.



MARK L. RYCKMAN, ICMA-CM, is the city manager of Corning, New York.



Command Prompt :

Establishing a well-defined policy on ChatGPT in your organization will be essential to ensure its appropriate use.

in the documents, conduct basic financial analysis, and write a summary report or prepare a PowerPoint presentation. Because ChatGPT is still in its early stages, make sure to review its calculations carefully for accuracy.

Writing Styles

Not all writing styles are appropriate for each situation you are addressing. ChatGPT was developed in a manner to provide responses in a variety of different styles depending upon the user's request. If you are writing a formal communication, you can ask ChatGPT to use a professional tone. The response you will receive will be more authoritative and convey a sense of expertise. If you

are responding to a resident complaint, you can instruct ChatGPT to use an empathetic style, which will impart a tone of understanding and empathy toward the reader. ChatGPT can write in many other styles as well, such as casual, persuasive, and critical. More advanced users are teaching ChatGPT to learn their personal writing styles.

Ethical Issues

The introduction of this powerful new technology does raise ethical concerns. First, and one of the most important, is privacy protections. The security of ChatGPT's site is unknown. It is important that you never enter personal data such as names, social security numbers, home addresses, medical information, or any other confidential matters.

Second, if you are using ChatGPT to write policies, contract language or the like, make sure to have your legal counsel review the final draft. ChatGPT is not a substitute for legal review. Because it pulls information from across the internet and repackages it, the text it is creating for you may contain biases and inaccuracies.



More advanced users are teaching ChatGPT to learn their personal writing styles.

Third, ChatGPT is not a substitute for employees doing their own work with the usual expectation that they are applying their expertise and judgment for which they are being paid. Its use within the organization should be transparent and fully disclosed. Because ChatGPT is drawing upon existing information and reformatting it, the use of its output may in some circumstances be considered

plagiarism. Establishing a well-defined policy on this subject will be essential to ensure its appropriate use.

Conclusion

ChatGPT has its advantages and disadvantages. Like any other skill, the more you practice using ChatGPT, the more proficient you will become in its use. At this point, it is apparent that this type of AI

technology is going to become increasingly prevalent in society. It would behoove us as local government managers to educate ourselves on the uses of this technology and provide guidelines for its application within our organizations. If we can harness its potential, while mitigating its risks, ChatGPT may prove to be a significant tool for the improvement of organizational efficiency and effectiveness. **PM**

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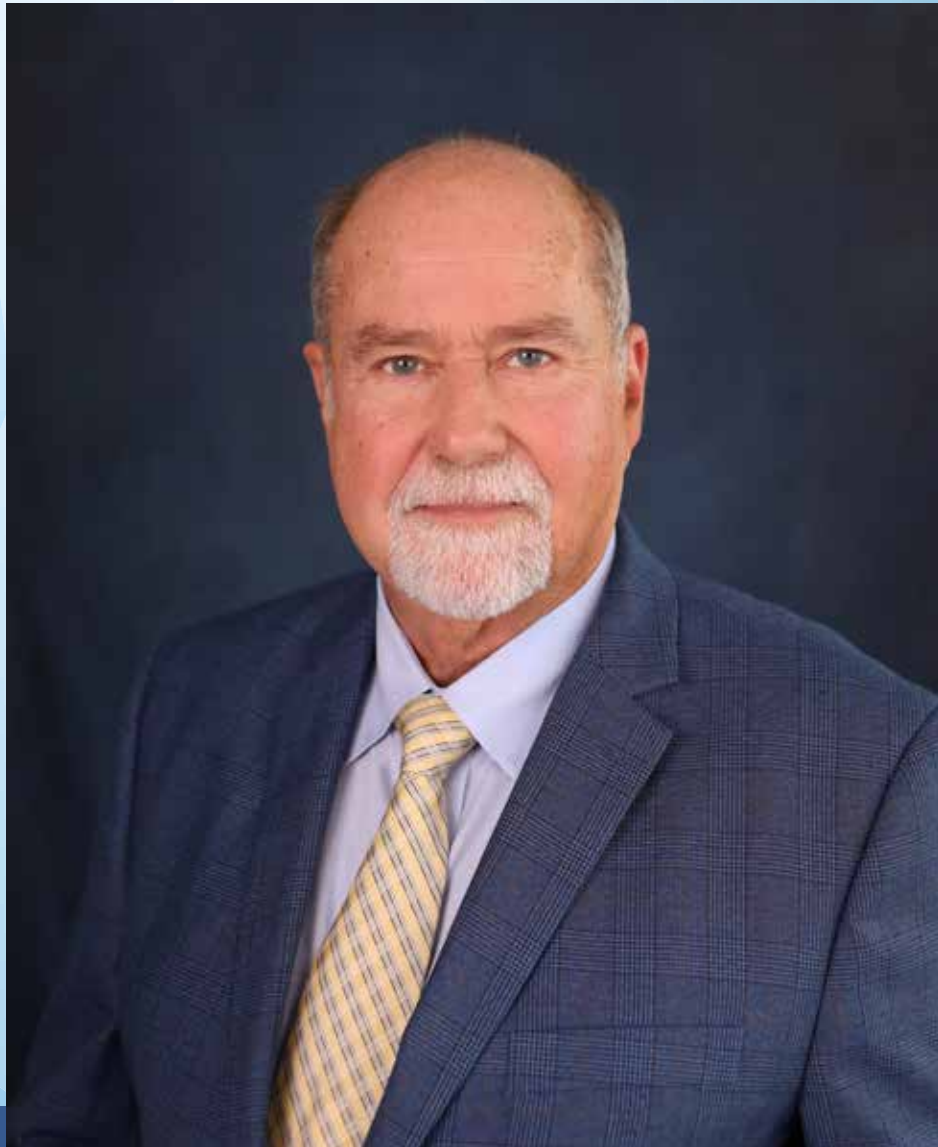
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ICMA



Mark *Johnson*, CPA

City Manager, Alcoa, Tennessee

Mark Johnson has nearly 50 years of experience in public service and has contributed significantly to Alcoa's growth and development during his tenure.

With a background in business management and accounting, Mark also holds a Certified Public Accountant designation (CPA), which has proven invaluable for the city's growth and debt reduction.

He began his public service career in Paris, Tennessee, where he served as finance director for 11 years, followed by three years as city manager. Later, he moved to Maryville, serving another 11 years as finance director before being chosen as city manager of Alcoa in 1999. Johnson's commitment to public service goes beyond his tenure in office through his involvement with local nonprofits and causes. He is a member of seven professional organizations and regularly supports United Way in the local community.

During his time as city manager, Johnson has overseen city growth of 17.7% and made major changes to infrastructure, such as the opening of a state-of-the-art membrane water filter treatment plant, a new service center facility, and a public safety building. Constructed in 2001, the public safety building, which houses both the fire and police department headquarters, has improved departmental collaboration by bringing both services together in one building, culminating in the police

department receiving the Commission on Accreditation Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA) designation.

Police Chief Carswell commented, "The Alcoa Police Department has developed a reputation for being a very progressive law enforcement agency in terms of its management practices, training, and equipment. This has allowed the department to continually improve its delivery of services and enhance the safety and security for the citizens who live, work, and visit. This would not be possible without Mark Johnson's shared vision and support of the Alcoa Police Department's mission to make the city of Alcoa one of the premier towns in the state of Tennessee."

His pending retirement, which will cap his 50-year tenure as a public servant, has only intensified his efforts to plan and promote the development of his community. He is credited with the groundbreaking of Springbrook Farm. The 240-acre parcel was initially a challenging site due to its brownfield status and was not expected to return high-level development. Johnson disagreed with that viewpoint, instead envisioning it as the new heart of Alcoa where the community could develop a city center, which it had been lacking since the community's founding in 1919. The new downtown, Springbrook Farm, has been developed to include residential, commercial, and multiuse districts, with even more significant projects ongoing.

Aware of the limited resources available to the community, Johnson has worked with partners that share the same values and goals in order to expand the city's capabilities. A joint development and purchasing group, created through interlocal agreements with neighboring communities, purchased parcels of developable land, called Partnership Parks, that provide opportunities for Maryville, Alcoa, and Blount County to jointly benefit from development both inside and outside their municipal limits. Three such projects

account for roughly \$500 million in new investments and over 2,000 new positions.

Johnson's vision has been the catalyst for many of the projects he has overseen during his service, including a major bypass project redesign; a pedestrian bridge that connects the Greenway Trail System, allowing residents and visitors to safely cross a major highway; and Greenway Trail Extensions spanning more than 30 miles, which link Maryville and Alcoa.

Johnson is a strong proponent of transparency, tirelessly working to make information available to the public. Johnson hosts a public briefing every month to discuss the financial status of the city, current projects, upcoming events, and information on growth and development. He meets with residents frequently to discuss their concerns and presents vital information in an attractive manner at local commission meetings.

A leader who is humble, approachable, and dedicated to his people, Johnson has created programs that have had a tremendous impact on generations of Alcoa employees, residents, and visitors, leaving a positive legacy for Alcoa. Always available to employees and staff at events such as the bimonthly birthday breakfast, he uses such occasions to answer questions from staff, inform attendees about the council-manager form of government, and provide them with the same information he provides commissioners on city developments. Johnson has built a strong leadership team and has made succession planning a priority by mentoring all levels of leaders within the organization. He has also incorporated the principles of continual improvement into the organization.

Johnson's passion, resilience, patience, and dedication are unmatched after nearly 50 years in public service. His willingness and ability to be available for anyone who needs him—whether they are an employee, resident, or visitor—is coupled with the fact that he is described by his employees as a quiet, humble leader whose dedication to others makes him an invaluable asset for the city of Alcoa. **PA**

This award was established in memory of former ICMA Executive Director Mark E. Keane. With funding support from MissionSquare Retirement, this award recognizes an outstanding local government administrator who has enhanced the effectiveness of government officials and consistently initiated creative and successful programs.



Gregory M. *Porter*

City Manager, Cedar Hill, Texas

Gregory Porter started his career as a public servant in 1987 as a part-time intern for Cedar Hill. He learned about community building and servant leadership from the ground up, serving various roles including planning, parks and recreation, human resources, economic development, public safety, animal control, emergency management, utilities, and public works. Porter was appointed Cedar Hill's city manager in 2015, and his leadership style reflects a deep appreciation for teamwork and professional development. Seeing first-hand the power of fostering talent and providing growth opportunities, he is a city manager who has been able to develop servant leaders across the organization.

A 2012 graduate of the Senior Executive Institute at the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, he is dedicated to the high-performance organizations framework for empowering all employees as leaders within the organization and the community. Porter has created interdisciplinary teams across departments and functional groups to encourage innovation, give employees opportunities to learn about the city, and empower them to take ownership of processes and service delivery. These teams help members grow both professionally and personally by addressing strategic issues and building relationships within the community.

Porter convened a group of mid-level managers who meet every month to discuss, understand, and address a variety of current issues, while gaining valuable experience outside their immediate responsibilities. He attends their meetings and maintains direct communication, giving them the opportunity to have a significant impact on city programs and policies. Shawn Ray,

parks and recreation director and a former member of the group, says, "Through this group, Porter gave me the chance to work with my peers and city leadership on initiatives that I would otherwise not be involved in. This group is seen as leaders in the organization because of this and other opportunities."

A proponent of professional development for employees at all levels, Porter has led the creation and implementation of two citywide programs that provide opportunities for growth and learning. City University (CityU) was launched in 2015 to expose employees to the city's various departments and functions. The hands-on experience allows participants to gain insight into the city's overall mission and how their own operations are connected. CityU graduates say they have a better understanding of city operations and the variety of available career opportunities.

Building on the success of CityU, Porter championed CityME. This formal mentorship program matches employees in a one-on-one mentoring relationship for an entire year. As an ardent supporter of the program, Porter encourages mentors and mentees to participate and personally mentors several employees every year. Michelle Ebanks, communications and community engagement manager, was one of Porter's 2018 mentees. She shares, "His approachability, availability, and ability to listen with compassion and genuineness exceeded my expectations and set the foundation for my professional and personal development. With his powerful testimony and leadership, I not only feel equipped but inspired to achieve my life goals and plant seeds of servant leadership wherever I go."

Cedar Hill places a high value on relationships and people, and Porter has made it a priority to foster this value among city employees, providing opportunities for them to build relationships within the community and between each other. He encourages employees to volunteer for local organizations to strengthen their connection with the community and support servant leadership. City employees serve on the boards of the Cedar Hill Chamber of Commerce, Cedar Hill Rotary Club, Leadership Southwest, industry boards, nonprofit boards, and neighborhood organizations. Porter leads by example, serving on the boards of the Dogwood Canyon Audubon Center at Cedar Hill and Cedar Hill Chamber of Commerce.

He has also promoted the development and mentoring of Cedar Hill youths through the creation of the Mayor's Teen Council, allowing high school students to learn about local government, participate in community service projects, and have a meaningful voice on issues critical to the future of their city.

In his 36 years of public service in Cedar Hill, he has helped develop countless local government community leaders. Under his leadership, the city has institutionalized opportunities for professional and personal growth through sustained and structured programs championed from the very top of the organization. Porter's deliberate and sustained cultivation of the next generation of servant leaders has paid dividends to the city organization, the Cedar Hill community, and the local government profession. **PM**

This award goes to an outstanding local government administrator who has made a significant contribution to the career development of new talent in professional local government management, in honor of former ICMA President L. P. (Perry) Cookingham, who is credited with creating the local government internship.

ASSISTANT EXCELLENCE IN LEADERSHIP AWARD
IN MEMORY OF BUFORD M. WATSON JR.



Kimberly D.
Richardson

Assistant City Manager, Peoria, Illinois

Beginning her role as assistant city manager in January 2022, Kimberly Richardson's responsibilities in Peoria, Illinois, include overseeing the Economic Development Department and Emergency Communications Center.

Richardson was previously the deputy city manager for Evanston, Illinois, where she supervised and guided directors, provided policy guidance, oversaw daily operations, took part in collective bargaining, and worked on racial equality initiatives. Prior to this, Richardson's responsibilities included managing fleets and facilities, assessing technology requirements, managing a \$300 million city budget, and working with state and government agencies. Evanston City Manager Wally Bobkiewicz promoted Richardson to the position of deputy city director in 2018. "I am especially excited that she will lend her expertise to work with our superb staff in such key areas as equity and empowerment, cultural arts, and sustainability to continue to enhance these best-in-class programs," Bobkiewicz said at the time.

As deputy city manager in Evanston, she was integral to the groundbreaking reparations program initiated by the city. "We should honor what happened in Evanston as historic," said Dreisen Heath, a racial justice researcher with Human Rights Watch. "The city of Evanston's remedy plan was always centered around the localized harm that Black residents in Evanston faced. That means looking at the

local policies, laws, and practices that were anti-Black and discriminatory and how they impacted the Black residents there. These reparative housing measures were specific to harms that happened between 1919 and 1969 in Evanston, Illinois, and therefore specific harms require specific remedies.... We need local governments to assume their culpability in creating these harms so that we have a more holistic response to the level of pain and suffering that continues to impact Black people on all economic and social corners."

She has worked in six different communities: Rockford, Bensenville, Riverside, Flossmoor, Evanston, and Peoria. Her talent and dedication have helped employees, residents, businesses, and councilmembers. In addition to her work in local government management, she has shown leadership by advancing ethics and transparency, serving as an example and role model, encouraging others, and demonstrating leadership.

She was featured in a 2021 *PM Magazine* article about early-to-mid-career women who make a difference through their dedication and commitment to both their organizations and their residents. She was honored with six other women who are breaking barriers and leading the future of local government. In that article, she relayed a story about a meaningful project she coordinated: "A few years ago I read an article about how in 1994, Congress designated the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday as a national day of service. The community I worked for at the time did not have any official MLK Day commemoration celebrations. So, working through one of our volunteer boards, we developed a communitywide day of service, which took months to plan. The first year was very chaotic, but successful. Many years later, the event is well organized and stronger than ever and has become a community tradition."

Richardson is the kind of leader who can transform local government.

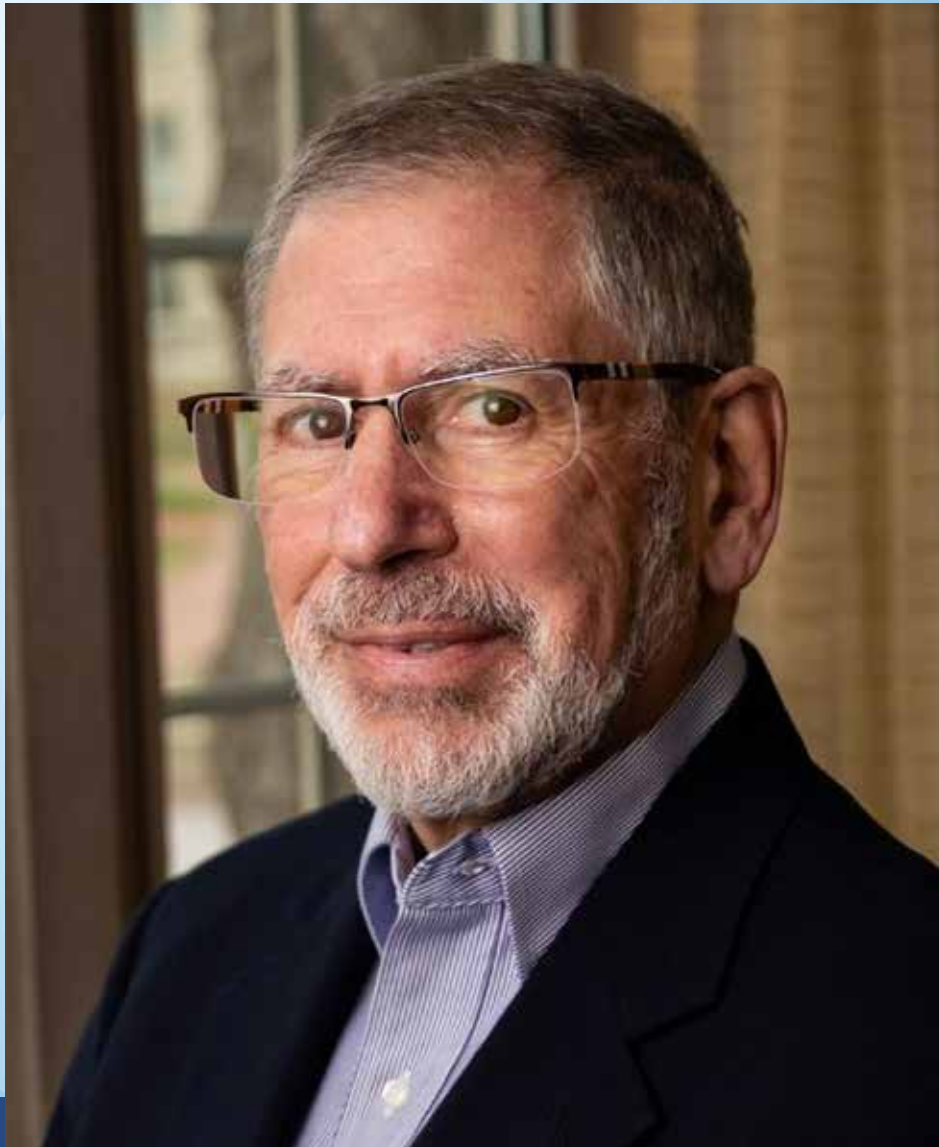
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Richardson consistently goes above and beyond to advance excellence in public service. Her extensive and dedicated work with ICMA, ILCMA, Illinois Association of Municipal Management Assistants, Legacy Project, the League of Women in Government, National Forum for Black Public Administrators, and the Illinois Public Employer Labor Relations Association has been beneficial for both colleagues and community members.

She is humble, preferring others to be in the spotlight, while continuing to serve with excellence. Her willingness to take part in educational panels and podcasts about local government demonstrates her accessibility and commitment to building her profession, sharing ideas, and embracing new challenges.

Richardson is the kind of leader who can transform local government. Young professionals are often told that they need to see it before believing it, and she has been the woman they need to see. A fine example of emerging leadership in the profession, she knows how to build up others. **PM**

This award, commemorating former ICMA President Buford M. Watson Jr., honors a local government management professional who has made significant contributions toward excellence in leadership as an assistant (regardless of title) to a chief local government administrator or department head.



Mark M. *Levin*, ICMA-CM

Clinical Associate Professor, *Indiana University*

Mark Levin is an experienced classroom teacher with more than 40 years of experience in local government administration. As a clinical associate professor at Indiana University's O'Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs, he brings this expertise to his classroom teaching, using his practical knowledge with exercises from the real world.

Levin is passionate about growing the local government management field and making sure students are prepared. On the first day, he will tell students that his job is not to teach the job, as they will learn that. Rather, his responsibility is to prepare his students for a job interview. He explains that there are only so many things he can cover in a 16-week course, and that most of the skills will be learned in the workplace. From his point of view, his role is to give students assignments and case studies to test practical skills, as well as deepen their understanding of difficult situations that face local government administrative professionals. Levin encourages thought-out reactions to problems to ensure that in an interview, when asked about ethical dilemmas or council-manager relationships, or how to prepare a budget justification for a project, students will be prepared.

In his budgeting course, he divides students into small groups, each representing a department head. His

students are then asked to research and justify a new supplemental expense in a city council presentation. In the same way, students in the local government management course are required to complete an "in-basket exercise," where they act as assistants of the manager and must organize messages, requests, and complaints, and explain their solutions. They do this by using the materials of the course and the ICMA Code of Ethics. These practical exercises aim to improve students' technical skills while generating interest in the subject.

Levin is a true helper, sharing announcements whenever he can about internships, job resources, alumni visits, and upcoming ICMA events. Levin will tell a student who to contact if they express an interest in certain subjects or careers. Levin also provides advice on who to talk to at the ICMA Annual Conference and their background, how to introduce oneself, and how to have a fruitful conversation. Levin's advice and willingness to act as a link between people has helped countless students get an internship, job, or a significant promotion. **RM**

Levin's advice and willingness to act as a link between people has helped countless students get an internship, job, or a significant promotion.

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Established in the name of Stephen B. Sweeney, the longtime director of the University of Pennsylvania's Fels Institute of Government, this award is presented to an academic leader or academic institution that has made a significant contribution to the formal education of students pursuing careers in local government.



Kelsee Jordan *Lee, CEcD*

Planning and Economic Development Director, Cibolo, Texas

Kelsee Jordan Lee started her career as Cibolo's business development coordinator more than seven years ago. She was promoted to director of economic development within a short time, a testament to the natural leadership she possesses and the impact she has been able to make. An unstoppable force in the promotion of economic growth and development, she has created countless jobs, brought new opportunities to businesses, and has driven economic development strategy and vision. Her leadership and dedication are well known and respected throughout the community.

Under her leadership, Cibolo saw 17 businesses open or expand in 2022, and is now home to over 245 businesses, including Aisin, which will be opening a massive transmission manufacturing campus that will create hundreds of new jobs; and Cibolo H-E-B, a 110,000 square foot supermarket. Lee partnered with regional partners to attract major investments, such as the AW Texas automotive transmission factory, bringing \$400 million in capital investment and 900 jobs to the city's underdeveloped corridor. She also assisted in recruiting Cibolo Crossing as the city's first high-end lifestyle center, providing a new sustainable tax base and an upscale entrance to the city limits.

Lee maintains a strong connection with the community, attending local events, representing the city at regional events, and being active on social media to promote the city's programs and initiatives. A recently launched social media campaign, "What's Coming Wednesday," highlights new businesses coming to Cibolo. On Small Business Saturday, her team sets up a stand at the market to engage with residents. In

*Lee is an
empowering,
dedicated, and
compassionate leader.*

• • • • •

collaboration with regional partners, they host job fairs for residents to meet employers and showcase local talent. The company also works with local youth, hosting career days to introduce them to local government opportunities. Lee engages the community and gives back, ensuring their voices are heard.

Lee and her team have brought forth numerous resources and initiatives to support existing businesses. The Business Improvement Grants (BIG) program provided reimbursement grants to businesses in the targeted areas to support exterior improvements. The Cibolo Business Directory was launched to promote local businesses in the community. During the holiday season, they introduced a rewards program that encouraged consumers to support local businesses. Recently, they launched a Small Business Training Page that includes a wealth of information for small business owners.

While at San Marcos, she was responsible for the management and creation of the city-funded Small Business Counseling Program. This program provided financial stipends and 1:1 technical assistance to small businesses on topics such as marketing, bookkeeping, and succession planning. She led the creation of a Media Production Development Zone in the city

limits, and successfully applied for Texas Enterprise Zone incentives to complement local incentives. She also developed and administered a grant program that used funding from the American Rescue Plan Act to reimburse improvements to public spaces and workplaces mitigating COVID impacts.

Lee received her CECd in 2022, as one of the youngest economic development professionals to successfully pass the exam and go through the selection process. She has won multiple awards, including the Measured Goals Award from the Texas Economic Development Council and the Gold Award for Innovation in Economic Development Week from the International Economic Development Council. She is also a mentor with the Women Leading Government Central Texas Chapter and was a finalist for the Alamo Young Government Leaders Award for Public Servant of the Year.

An empowering, dedicated, and compassionate leader, Lee is deeply concerned about the success and well-being of her team and city. She celebrates the contributions of her team and collaborates with other departments, contributing everything from strategy and planning to financial analysis and facilitating internal communication at all levels. Lee's leadership is a great example of the city's vision to improve employee satisfaction, strive for organizational excellence, and deliver high quality of service. Lee has a career filled with accomplishments in the public sector. She has shown a consistent understanding of the challenges that the region faces, and the creative solutions needed to overcome them. Through her innovative initiatives, she has helped to attract new businesses, foster entrepreneurship, create new jobs, and enhance the quality of life for residents. **PM**

Established in memory of former ICMA Executive Director William H. Hansell Jr., this award recognizes an outstanding early career local government professional who has demonstrated leadership, competency, and commitment to local government as a profession.

COMMUNITY Equity & Inclusion

10,000-49,999 Population

THE CITY OF TUKWILA EQUITY POLICY IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE (EPIC)

Tukwila, Washington

David Cline, City Administrator

Rachel Bianchi, Deputy City Administrator

Niesha Fort-Brooks, Community Engagement Manager



David Cline



Rachel Bianchi



Niesha
Fort-Brooks

In its fourth year of implementation, Tukwila's Equity Policy has seen great success in its efforts to reduce barriers within its organization, to improve its hiring practices,

to conduct effective outreach, and most importantly, to normalize the daily conversation about including equity in daily work. Tukwila has achieved this by creating an employee-led Equity Policy Implementation Committee (EPIC) in 2019 to address these issues and to follow through on the council's adopted policies.

As one of the most racially and ethnically diverse cities in the United States (26% Asian, 20% Black/African American, 18% Hispanic/Latino), Tukwila has a history of supporting discussions and policies about race and equity. For example, it started an Equity and Social Justice Commission in 1998 and is known as an action-oriented inclusive community. Tukwila, just south of Seattle, has 325 employees, serves 21,000 diverse residents, and has more than 48,000 jobs within nine square miles.

In 2017, Tukwila knew that it had to improve in several areas. The city's current employees didn't fully reflect its diverse population, had not followed up on its multilingual Comprehensive Plan, and it became apparent that not all city employees fully understood the importance of equity. The city began a year-long effort to incorporate the voices of city employees into a sustainable policy and practice. Inspired by staff strengths and neighboring Seattle and King County, the city joined the regional Governing for Racial Equity and Inclusion (GREI) coalition, a local group of government entities partnered with a national network through the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE).

In December 2017, the Tukwila City Council passed Resolution 1921. This resolution was developed by a group of interdepartmental employees with the help of the Equity and Social Justice Commission, who reviewed various regional and nationwide leading practices in equity and inclusion. Resolution 1921 accomplished five key things:

1. Provided a background, an overview including community demographics, and a call to action.
2. Created clarity of purpose for elected officials, staff, and the community.
3. Established a definition of equity: "Eliminating systemic barriers and providing fair access to programs, services, and opportunities to achieve social, civic, and economic justice within the City of Tukwila."
4. Created six clear, succinct policy goals that have been used to create annual work plans:



- Our city workforce reflects our community.
 - Community outreach and engagement is relevant, intentional, inclusive, consistent, and ongoing.
 - All residents and visitors receive equitable delivery of city services.
 - City government is committed to equity in decision making.
 - Equity serves as a core value for all long-term plans moving forward.
 - The city will build capacity around equity within city government and the broader community.
5. Implementation: Tukwila created EPIC to carry out this policy and tasked the long-standing Equity and Social Justice Commission to help monitor and inform ongoing work.

EPIC, officially established in 2019, is an interdepartmental team of 15-20 members that meet every month, led by the community engagement manager. They start each year with an annual half-day retreat to brainstorm workplan priorities that must be attainable, measurable, impactful, and aligned with the Equity Policy goals. The four or five priorities for the year are presented to the administrative team, city administrator, and mayor. These priorities are then finalized, included in the annual work plan, and then announced to all staff. Significant outcomes of these efforts include:

1. Demographic benchmarking for current staff and hiring practices.
2. Changes to hiring practices, such as masking applications, removing unnecessary qualification requirements, and requiring antibias training videos to be shown to all hiring panels.
3. Creation of an equity toolkit based on leading practices from GARE, GREI, and other resources, which is mandatorily used in all departments.
4. Ongoing training for all staff (anti-bias, equity policy, governing for racial equality, etc.)
5. Creation of an equitable outreach guide. First used for a new intergenerational center in 2021, the city reached over 78 different groups. This guide is now being used for the economic development plan and all future engagement activities.

Tukwila's experience with equity shows that it is possible to accomplish this important work with existing resources. All costs for these efforts were covered by existing staff, and the city has seen significant positive changes since their implementation. The equity policy is not just a document on a shelf, but part of daily conversations throughout the organization. By focusing on a small number of meaningful priorities every year, the city has been able to embrace and embed these efforts. **PM**

50,000 and Greater Population

EL PASO COUNTY ALL-ABILITIES PLAYGROUNDS

El Paso County, Texas

Betsy Keller, ICMA-CM, County Chief Administrator



Betsy Keller

A group of visionary members in the community decided that all children and families in El Paso County deserve exceptional play areas. They raised awareness about the difficulties people with disabilities have navigating public play areas that meet the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines but are not all-inclusive. Most take for granted the motion of a swing, a friendly environment to play with peers, and most importantly, a safe place where everyone can learn and grow.

In early 2018, Moms on Board (MOB), a nonprofit organization that works with local leaders on building and improving family-friendly amenities, approached El Paso County leaders to express the need for playgrounds that could be used both by children and adults who have physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, as well as those who have sensory processing issues. This prompted county leaders to develop a plan to provide safe and enjoyable play spaces for all children and families regardless of their abilities. In August 2018, county leaders applied for a \$1 million grant from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and established a partnership with MOB. Through this partnership, MOB, with the support of the Paso del Norte Foundation, agreed to raise at least \$750,000 to match through grants, in-kind support, and individual and corporate monetary donations. The county was awarded the grant in early 2019, and the nonprofit organization worked in collaboration with the county's Park and Recreation Department to ensure the goals were met.

But efforts to raise the necessary funds for the projects were severely impacted by the August 3, 2019, mass shooting event—one of the deadliest mass shootings in modern U.S. history—that had a devastating impact on the community, followed by the pandemic in 2020 that disrupted societies and economies across the world. The





deadline for MOB to complete its fundraising and funding obligations had to be extended twice, but despite the obstacles, the projects continued and El Paso County broke ground on its three all-abilities playgrounds in 2021. Through this collaboration, the county has been able to build the playgrounds with minimal cost to taxpayers. The county matched \$250,000 in cash, donated the land, and will maintain the all-abilities playgrounds.

In November 2022, the first of three all-abilities playgrounds opened in far west El Paso County, becoming the first playground of its kind in the county. Two other all-abilities playgrounds are currently under construction, with one scheduled to be completed soon in Central El Paso and the other to be inaugurated in far east El Paso County in October 2023.

County leaders acknowledged that inclusive public spaces are essential for shaping and transforming an all-inclusive community. By creating play areas accessible for everyone, regardless of physical or mental limitations, it helps promote diversity and acceptance within the community. El Paso County is in the far western corner of Texas, along the Rio Grande River, which forms the border between the United States and Mexico, and is home to more than 865,000 people, making it the ninth most populous county in Texas. Based on the most recent American Community Survey five-year (2016–2020), 8.3% of children 17 years of age and under in the county have difficulties performing activities due to a physical, mental, or emotional condition. The latest U.S. Census Bureau reports that in general, approximately 9.1% of the county's population have a disability. Many veterans who served at Fort Bliss Army Base in El Paso would also benefit from an all-inclusive playground where their children and grandchildren can join them in recreational activities. According to the Census Bureau Quickfacts from July 2017, El Paso has approximately 49,701 veterans of which 4,475 mirror the 9% statistic as having a disability.

These all-abilities playgrounds are not only inclusive of people with disabilities, but also strategically placed in areas to



address the lack of parks and recreational facilities in low-income neighborhoods where existing playgrounds and equipment did not meet ADA or safety standards, or playground equipment did not offer the public the features of an all-abilities playground. These playgrounds provide a safe and accessible play space for all children, including those with physical, mental, and developmental disabilities, as well as those with sensory processing issues. As a result, these projects are expected to have lifelong effects in the El Paso County community. Among the benefits are:

1. Increased physical activity and improved physical health due to additional access to safe and engaging play spaces.
2. Improved social and emotional wellbeing due to increased opportunities for social interaction and inclusion for people of all abilities.
3. Increased community engagement and improved relationships between residents and local government due to increased investment in the community.
4. Reduced levels of crime and vandalism due to increased visibility of safe recreational areas and improved community relationships.
5. Increased civic pride due to a sense of ownership and investment in the community.
6. Improved economic development due to increased investment in the community.

The implementation process taught county leaders the importance of working with subject matter experts and community members to ensure project success. In this instance, county leaders recognized that people with disabilities, through disability-focused and independent living organizations, had to be included in the process. Through the All-Abilities Playground Program, local government leaders provide safe, inclusive playgrounds for all members of the community, regardless of their abilities, while strengthening relationships between local government and the community by providing a space for families and friends to enjoy time together. **PA**

COMMUNITY Health & Safety

10,000-49,999 Population

DUARTE AREA RESOURCE TEAM PROGRAM

Duarte, California

Brian Villalobos, City Manager

Aida Torres, Crime Prevention Specialist



Brian Villalobos

Aida Torres

For more than 50 years, three multigenerational street gangs have impacted Duarte's youth. About 80% of Duarte's population is made up of immigrant families who tend to live at or below the poverty level, over 60% of school-aged children receive free or reduced lunches, and 37% of the city's youth live in single-parent households. Poverty and lack of parental monitoring can contribute to youth feeling marginalized and seeking a sense of social identity, which gangs capitalize on in recruitment, leading to youth engaging in deviant and criminal behaviors. In 1999, the Duarte Public Safety Department, along with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department, created an "explorer program," a commonly seen youth engagement program in police departments, with the intent of creating a pool of high school-age volunteers for special events. Although the program provided enrichment activities through volunteerism, it was limited in scope and impact, not fully addressing issues of youth violence and gang recruitment.

Duarte is not the only city in the San Gabriel Valley that has experienced gangs and gang violence. In 2009, to combat the violence at a regional scale, law enforcement attempted to include Duarte in a permanent gang injunction. This would have allowed for a lower legal standard to restrict someone's activity if they were suspected of being a gang member. Duarte chose not to enter the injunction because of concerns about civil liberties, overly punitive tactics, and an unclear efficacy as a gang-suppression tactic. In 2010, the Duarte Public Safety Department secured state funding to expand beyond the explorer program to integrate interventions that would address youth gang recruitment and focus on lowering juvenile arrests to prevent the next generation from entering a criminal lifestyle, naming this new program the Duarte Area Resource Team (DART).

DART is an evidence-based crime prevention and intervention program that focuses on youth development programming for



those 14–19 years old. Housed in the Public Safety Department/Sheriff's Substation, the program team is composed of the Duarte crime prevention specialist, a Los Angeles County school resource sheriff's deputy, and college interns to support the program. In close partnership with Duarte Unified School District, the program aims to keep youth out of the juvenile justice system. With sheriff deputies and city staff serving as mentors, the program teaches youth positive life skills and the capacity to better navigate difficult situations.

Program youth are identified by the school, law enforcement, or social service organizations as having challenges. These complex challenges may occur in multiple domains, such as limited academic success, lack of parental monitoring, negative peer groups, and substance abuse. The group mentoring program allows youth to self-report and receive the services they need, including counseling, educational mentorship, connecting to positive peer groups, and developing job skills. The youth are also required to participate in community events, such as graffiti removal, park cleanups, and working alongside deputies during city events for various civic groups. Volunteering and taking on leadership roles in the community can help youth develop a strong sense of community pride and ownership, reducing criminal activities such as vandalism and theft. DART directly addresses risk factors that often lead youth to criminal and delinquent behavior, while also providing positive peer groups in the community.

Initially, the program was funded by the city with a budget of \$10,000 and served around 20 youths annually. In the last 13 years,

DART has effectively served about 50 youths annually, using a \$25,000 annual operating budget from the general fund. State grant funds were also used in 2010, but due to the sustained success of the program, grantors are now focusing on other jurisdictions. This is detrimental to the program, as it requires consistent funding to continue its success.

Azusa Pacific University conducted an independent, three-year evaluation of DART using mixed methods, which found that the program has a positive and direct impact on youth, as well as the community. They found that the program had an overall 57.3% impact on the decline in juvenile arrests: a 98% decline over a 10-year time frame and 62% decline over the three-year time frame. Using snowball sampling and focus groups, researchers examined the program's extraordinary impact on youth attitudes toward delinquency, school, social responsibility, and collective efficacy. The conclusion was that DART has taken at-risk youth and created a pro-social network of youth who engage in community activities and develop transferable skills that build social capital and empower youth beyond the limitations of their community.

Researchers also used self-reported surveys that measured self-reported youth behavior, followed by qualitative focus groups. Measures examined various domains, including attitudes toward delinquency, commitment to school, collective efficacy, and parental supervision. Overall, researchers found that youth in the program engaged in less deviant behavior and more pro-social behaviors. Additionally, youth reported feeling previously unsafe in their school and neighborhood, but being in DART made them feel protected, safe, special, and part of something greater than themselves. Finally,



youth noted that other community programs either provided a physical place to “hang out” or made them feel unwelcome. Conversely, DART heavily involved staff, volunteers, and law enforcement, making youth feel included. The findings revealed that DART staff were not only working from their trauma-informed training but were invested in the youth with cultural competency.

DART has continued to evolve in the last 13 years to meet the current needs of youth. Founded with the primary goal of gang prevention, because of its success it now addresses issues such as increased vaping among youth, cyberbullying, and the physical and mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past 13 years, city staff have learned that DART must be agile and adept since youth development programs require robust relationships with both internal and external stakeholders. This will help staff to understand what challenges youth face. The success of DART programs is dependent on partnerships with Duarte Unified Schools

District, Duarte parks and recreation department, especially the teen center, and youth organizations like the Boys and Girls Club.

DART would not exist without the interest in prevention and intervention over punitive methods among the public safety staff and city council, and it would not thrive without the partnership between Duarte public safety, the city manager's office, parks and recreation, elected officials, L. A. County sheriff's department, and deeply invested community organizations throughout the years. A current Duarte councilmember, who was a DART member growing up, credits his dedication to public service to his DART experience and its positive impact on his life. DART is a youth crime prevention program that demonstrates a commitment to developing youth, the future of every community. **PM**



50,000 and Greater Population

COMMUNITY PARAMEDICINE PROGRAM

Plano, Texas

Mark D. Israelson, City Manager

Mark D.
Israelson

Like many fire departments, Plano Fire-Rescue carefully tracks its service metrics. From 2009 to 2018, the number of low acuity calls (individuals calling for emergency medical assistance who do not require an ambulance) grew by 42%. Gaps in primary care and a growing number of preventable hospital readmissions were causing an impact to Plano residents and local hospitals. This trend could have also negatively impacted the city's service requirements and overall costs to taxpayers.

In 2014, Plano Fire-Rescue took note of this trend and began collaborative partnerships with local hospitals to create a better way to manage these patients through an alternative care pathway. The hospitals offered the guidance and training needed to create a new Community Paramedic Program within Plano Fire-Rescue. The hospitals and insurance systems fund the program, which prevents a budget impact on the city and ensures long-term financial sustainability.

The pilot program lasted 18 months and after its success two local hospitals expanded the program to include all adult hospitals in Plano. All involved parties together developed a detailed strategic plan and a list of monthly tracked goals. The program is centered on the patient and changes are made in response to data. It currently has 649 patients enrolled who have received service more than once and up to one year.

The program directly benefits patients who enroll in the program, as well as Plano Fire-Rescue members. The local hospitals and the entire Plano healthcare system, as well as all residents and visitors in Plano, are indirect beneficiaries. By reducing low acuity 911 calls, the program provides more in-service time for EMS and Fire apparatus, allowing Plano Fire-Rescue the ability to be ready for any type of emergency more hours of the day. To date, 1,122 911 EMS calls have been prevented because of this program. With an average 911 call of 45 minutes and with two apparatuses used on the majority of calls, Plano Fire-Rescue estimates 1,683 hours of apparatus usage has been avoided as a direct result of the program. This number is expected to grow with the addition of resources, partnerships, and expansion into new areas of preventable or avoidable EMS calls for service.

Each customer or patient seen saves on average \$1,000 in out-of-pocket money, with the majority being Medicare beneficiaries on fixed incomes. Hospitals are often the first to be penalized in today's healthcare system when a patient doesn't receive the proper care. The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid can assess a penalty to a hospital if a patient is discharged from the hospital for



specific diagnoses and returns for any reason, and these penalties could be more than \$1 million per year, making the Community Paramedicine Program a valuable asset to hospitals. This program has also had an impact on health insurance cost reduction, specifically Medicare, since each hospital admission using an ambulance transport costs insurance thousands of dollars.

City costs associated with the program are included in Plano Fire-Rescue's departmental budget. The department calculation for time invested in the program is 1 full-time employee (FTE): \$125,000, including all benefits. All other manpower costs are covered by funding from local hospitals. A local hospital purchased one program vehicle that Plano Fire-Rescue maintains. In addition to employee and vehicle costs, some consumables are used for laboratory testing and various other testing, such as electrocardiograms and ultrasounds. In total, local hospitals contribute \$134,282 per year and the city contributes roughly the same amount.

Additional value provided can be found in resident quality of life improvement. The following independent data was gathered from Plano Fire-Rescue Community Paramedic Program patients:



- 90% said the program is beneficial to themselves and their family on a level of 10 (scale of 0-10).
- 96.667% said they would recommend the program on a level of 10 (scale of 0-10).
- 93.5% rated the overall quality of care a level of 10 (scale of 0-10).
- 93.3% gave the program a level 10 rating in overall satisfaction (scale of 0-10).
- 85.7% said the community partners rate the program's quality of community partners a 10 (scale of 0-10).

The program proved invaluable at meeting the needs of Plano's underserved populations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of long-standing community partner relationships, the program was used to administer 5,097 vaccine doses to municipal employees and their families, independent senior living facilities, group homes, shut-ins, and special populations.

The program was also critical in Winter Storm Uri operations. Program staff provided medical operations at warming stations, transferred indigent populations from regional transit stations and emergency rooms to warming stations, delivered and continued replenishment of oxygen bottles to residents on oxygen generators, performed welfare checks, and delivered water to homes and independent living communities.

Plano Fire-Rescue's Community Paramedic Program has a wide-ranging impact and delivers better health outcomes without putting an undue burden on local taxpayers. Recently, a nationally recognized medical research institution approached Plano Fire-Rescue to develop a blind study examining the long-term outcomes for health and cost. This innovative solution has received national attention and could be used as a model to improve the effectiveness and impact of healthcare delivery nationwide. **PM**

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- ✓ Extract insights from data that drive action
- ✓ Define how AI modeling is applied to predictive PBB data sets
- ✓ Allocate resources more strategically and efficiently

COMMUNITY *Partnership*

Under 10,000 Population

IMAGINE CASS—EMBRACE THE VISION

Cassopolis, Michigan

Emilie G. LaGrow, Esq., Village Manager



Emilie G.
LaGrow, Esq.

Cassopolis, a small, rural, low- to moderate-income village of 1,684 residents, proves every day that residents in all communities deserve access to a world-class community. The Imagine Cass—Embrace the Vision Program sought to transform the entire community, stop the perpetual decline, and unite the community for the first time in decades under the core principles of community vision, collaboration, citizen-led change, and the premise that if you invest in yourself, others will invest in you.

The cost of creating Imagine Cass was \$25,000 and included a collaboration with the Michigan State University Extension and their Sustainable Built Environment Initiative Program, and the three public engagement sessions hosted within the community. To date, the actual dollars spent to implement the vision and projects resulting from the Imagine Cass is just over \$30 million dollars and climbing!

The village worked with many units of government and created multiple private partnerships to execute Imagine Cass, including the following:

- Cass County.
- Cass County Economic Development Committee.
- Michigan State University Extension.
 - Sustainable Built Environment Initiative.
 - First Impressions Tourism Assessment.
- Cassopolis Main Street Committee.
- Cassopolis Public Schools.
- Midwest Energy and Communications.
- Pokagon Band of Potawatomi Indians: Mno-Bmadsen.
- Southwest Michigan Realtors' Association.
- The Edward Lowe Foundation.
- Southwestern Michigan College.
- Cass Area Council on Aging.
- Cass County Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control.
- Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy.
- Department of Natural Resources.
- Michigan Economic Development Corporation.

- Michigan State Housing Development Authority.
- Michigan Township Participating Plan.
- Michigan Department of Transportation.
- Canadian National Rail.
- Community Economic Development Association of Michigan.
- Cass/Vandalia Chamber of Commerce.
- United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.

In their first Imagine Cass community event, residents of Cassopolis described the village as dying, tired, rundown, sleepy, and boring. It was harsh, but they listened and asked the community to 'Imagine Cass':

- *Imagine* what it could be.
- *Imagine* what it could look like.
- *Imagine* where they are going.
- *Imagine* the legacy they want to leave.

They did imagine, and dreamed of a community that was vibrant, beautiful, alive, connected, and thriving. Here are just some of the things the community imagined and implemented under the Imagine Cass—Embrace the Vision initiative.

- 63 new light poles with color-changing LED post tops that emit free Wi-Fi, play music, and have internal irrigation systems.
- 13 digital LED banners downtown used to showcase local events, students, veterans, and community pride.
- 25,000 square feet of pavers, including a custom designed compass.
- 2,200 new plantings giving a splash of color to the community.
- Taking an abandoned road and creating a free year-round usable community plaza that includes a new beach in the middle of downtown.
 - The village included a food truck lane, an outdoor amphitheater on the water, custom designed swing tables and benches, a free life jacket program, free Wi-Fi, a fish-shaped bike rack, the Snack Shack, and their famous Stone Lake Monster paddleboat.
- A 230-foot-long ADA accessible pier that includes fishing areas, transient boat slips, and an open end for everyone to jump in the lake.
- A custom fabricated archway creating a memorable gateway into the beach filled with fun quotes and great reminders to Imagine Cass and Embrace the Vision.

- An ADA-accessible boardwalk along Stone Lake adding connectivity to the downtown that can be used by walkers and bikers, including fishing platforms and lookout areas.
- Free monthly community events including Beach Bash and Rock the Block concerts performed at the pavilion on the beach throughout the summer, the Stone Lake Ice Fishing Tournament, and the Christmas in Cassopolis Community Celebration.
- The elimination of five blighted municipal buildings and the creation of an award-winning, state-of-the-art municipal complex.
- Murals everywhere!
- A poured-in-place skatepark with a bike track.
- 25,000 feet of road, water, and sewer replacements and upgrades.
- The installation of new playground areas designed by our elementary school students.
- The creation of the Southwest Michigan Advanced Research and Technology Park (SMART), which will provide access to robust electric, fiber, rail, and solar allowing companies to work toward lowering their carbon footprint.

Communication and collaboration were the keys to the success of Imagine Cass. Early and frequent involvement of the community, the creation of the Imagine Cass brand that the community could support, and the execution have led to new excitement and belief in the community. Residents no longer describe Cassopolis as dying, tired, run down, sleepy, and boring. They are proud of Cassopolis, proud to be part of its transformation, and proud to pass on to the next generation a vibrant, exciting, and thriving Cassopolis. **PM**



10,000-49,999 Population

REIMAGINING THE MENTAL HEALTH OFFICER, COMBINING LOCAL RESOURCES

Boerne, Texas

Benjamin Edward Thatcher, ICMA-CM, City Manager



Benjamin
Thatcher

To meet the growing needs for additional mental health resources for residents of the community, Boerne recognized an opportunity to reimagine the role of a mental health officer (MHO), partner creatively with nonprofits in the community, and address youth intervention proactively.

Boerne and Kendall County are located in an area of rapid rural growth. Their Local Mental Health Authority No. 20, which is responsible for the mental health of local residents, covers 19 counties and 22,593 square miles. They lack the resources necessary to meet the critical mental needs of the city and county, so local law enforcement is usually responsible for addressing these issues and the number of calls for Boerne police officers continues to grow.

Recognizing the urgency in the situation, Boerne partnered with the Boerne Police Department, the Kendall County Sheriff's Office (KCSO), Kendall County EMS (KCEMS), Hill Country Family Services (HCFS)—a local nonprofit with a licensed clinician, and the school district to work together to address the mental health needs in the area with the following goals and objectives:

- Avoid duplication of efforts between community partners.
- Utilize each entity's full potential to avoid additional costs.
- Identify missing resources and address shortfalls.
- Increase cooperation between all groups.
- Provide earlier intervention and follow-ups with patients.

In addressing the process, it was realized that officers spent many hours on emergency detention (ED) and mental health (MH) calls. Although officers received mental health officer and crisis intervention training, the administrative processes that followed an initial call were tedious and time consuming. As a result of the increase in calls, officers were also interacting with more people who are in crisis situations where they had to use all options available before resorting to deadly force. Because of this, Boerne Police, along with the partners, focused their collective attention on these issues first.

Officer Rebecca Foley was appointed as the department's first MHO on January 1, 2022. She was previously the department's community relations officer for several years. Officer Foley has a wide range of law enforcement experience as a patrol officer, community officer, licensed tactical paramedic, crisis negotiator, and mental health



officer. She has had several years of service responding to people experiencing a mental health crisis and effectively providing resources. She is currently working toward becoming a state-licensed mental health counselor, specializing in first responders, veterans, and the LGBTQ+ community. She is a member of the Texas Counselors Association, the Texas CIT Association, the Texas Association of Hostage Negotiators, and a board member of Boerne Reads.

Officer Foley's first order was to assist patrol officers on MH/ED calls, where she not only responds to crisis calls but also travels with patients to the hospital. This allows patrol officers to return to duty more quickly while she focuses on patient care. She also provides follow-up outreach to make sure the patient is utilizing the treatment options made available to them and connects them with additional mental health resources.

Her role with Boerne Reads allows her to have meaningful interactions with the youth population. Along with the other MHOs, she works closely with school resource officers, counselors, and administrators in the district to help at-risk students with mental health issues.

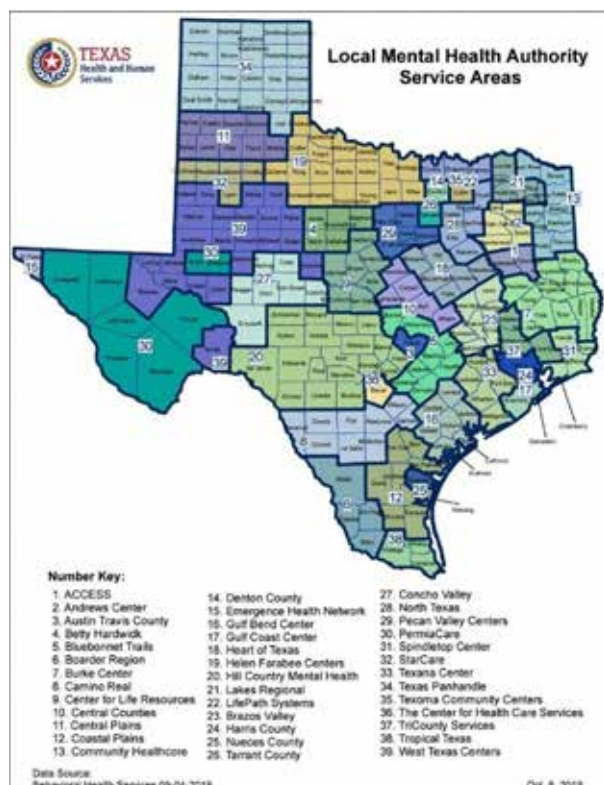
With the addition of an MHO, Boerne realized it was not a cost-effective solution to take on each step of the process, as other entities within the community already provided



mental health resources effectively. With an additional \$20,000 from Boerne via a delegate agency agreement, HCFS created a social worker position to ensure that patients receive treatment, as well as financial and food assistance, during times of crisis. The social worker also assists Officer Foley in follow-ups with families and individuals and with calls to other MHOs. Since mental health crisis calls often result in individuals being hospitalized out of county for their own safety, KCEMS has a paramedic working alongside the MHOs and licensed clinician to address any medical issues that may arise.

The number of MH-related calls increases as Boerne's population grows. Many residents are sent to the county jail rather than receiving the appropriate help. Officer Foley, along with the rest of her team, works to divert people in need of crisis services away from emergency departments and jails and toward community-based behavioral healthcare treatment that is more appropriate and less expensive.

As of 2023, the Kendall County Sheriff's Office has two MHOs and Boerne has one to address mental health crises calls in the community. The personnel changes were achieved by shifting an existing full-time position in the police department and helping a local nonprofit with a small grant. In a true collaborative effort, Boerne, Kendall County, KCEMS, and HCFS have come together to address service gaps for mental and behavioral health issues with an upstream focus on preventing mental health crises, emergency detentions, incarceration, and suicides. This program has extended to the school district and school resource officers to gain a more proactive response for students needing mental health support and follow up, and police officers are also able to use the expertise of MHOs for their own needs following a high-risk call to spot signs of trauma in the police force. **PM**



50,000 and Greater Population

OAK PARK RIVER FOREST HOME REPAIR PROGRAM

Oak Park, Illinois

Kevin J. Jackson, Village Manager

Pamela Mahn, Senior Services Director



Kevin J. Jackson



Pamela Mahn

Since 2002, Oak Park Township and River Forest Township have been sharing senior services under an intergovernmental agreement. Both townships are dedicated to strengthening their community by implementing programs that promote the health and wellbeing of all Oak Park and River Forest residents. Their senior services department's mission is to enhance the quality of life for seniors in the community by providing a broad array of supportive services that promote the values of independence, self-esteem, and dignity. Collaborations beyond this initial intergovernmental agreement are prioritized to ensure that programming is innovative and meets the needs of older adults, their family members, and caregivers to ensure the fulfillment of unmet needs in the community, avoid duplication of service, and carefully conserve taxpayer dollars.

The need to create an initiative to improve accessibility and home repairs had been a longstanding one for older adults. Previously, the only way for seniors to secure these service referrals was through word of mouth or by weeding through local provider lists to research and vet each business—a lengthy process. The purpose of the Oak Park River Forest Home Repair Program is to provide older adults who want to age in place or downsize into alternative housing options with more resources so they can remain in the community. Housing stock is an issue in the community as it is aging, expensive to maintain, and oftentimes has limited accessibility accommodations for older homeowners.

These factors converged during a meeting between the Metropolitan Mayors Caucus and the Northwest Housing Partnership (NWHPP), a local nonprofit organization, about their handyman program operating in the Northwest suburbs. The director of senior services for Oak Park and River Forest recognized the opportunity to partner with a proven local expert to fulfill unmet community needs. Securing a tentative agreement with NWHPP, the director sought support from the Oak Park's and River Forest's respective boards to approve a new intergovernmental agreement to bring the program to residents, supported by funding from the partners.

This agreement spread the \$7,000 cost to NWHPP for handling the administrative work, which included advertising, in-person recruitment, background checks, and insurance. It also combined the communication resources of the partners to market and promote the program to residents and staff, and to make referrals when necessary. The partners unanimously agreed to offer the Oak Park River Forest



Home Repair Program to older adults residing in Oak Park and River Forest. This program provides residents with secure services from reliable, screened, background-checked, and insured workers at a fixed hourly cost. In the first nine-month period of the agreement, over 145 residents used the service and over 45 were repeat customers. After analyzing the program usage and repair requests made in the first year, the partners decided to extend this valuable program to residents ages 18 to 59 with disabilities.

The program will be expanding to include the Community Aging in Place, Advancing Better Lives for Elders (CAPABLE) project, which allows a registered nurse, an occupational therapist, and a handy person to assist with the resident's challenges for accessibility within the home and make necessary home repairs to help them safely age in place.

The offerings of this program have been well received by the community, garnering repeat utilization, word-of-mouth referrals to friends and neighbors, and overwhelmingly positive reviews of the service, handypersons, and administrative team. This partnership also raises awareness of the contributions of local government managers by exemplifying the collaboration, responsiveness to community needs, and flexibility required for effective management while ensuring nonduplication of services and cost-effectiveness through services provided via intergovernmental agreements and in partnership with local nonprofit organizations. **PM**

COMMUNITY *Sustainability*

Under 10,000 Population

WHITTAKER POINT SHORELINE RESTORATION Oriental, North Carolina

Diane H. Miller, ICMA-CM, Town Manager



Diane H. Miller

As a retirement community, Oriental is gifted with a wealth of professionals who are willing to lend their knowledge and expertise to the town at no cost. James Blackerby, a retired geologist, provided the town with an assessment of the erosion of a peninsula of land that had protected access to one third of the residential land, both boatyards, and five marinas that are essential to the tourist-driven economy. Oriental is located on the Inner Banks of North Carolina, on the Neuse River, west of the entrance to the Pamlico Sound. This sound is the largest on the East Coast of North America and is home to multimillion dollar commercial and recreation fishing. Whittaker Pointe, a privately owned peninsula, had eroded from around 18 acres to just five acres and decreased even more during the planning phases with large, near-permanent breaches, providing little to no protection in an area frequented by tropical activity.

As the mayor and board began to understand the problem, noting the shoaling of the entry creek to the largest businesses and the more frequent need for dredging, town manager Diane



H. Miller was directed to look for solutions. The team, armed with Mr. Blackerby's documentation, including depth readings, historic outlines, and fetch and wave energy from NOAA and the U.S. Geographic Survey, approached Dr. Lexia Weaver at the North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF), whose expertise is in living shorelines, protection, and sustainability.

Dr. Weaver engaged NCCF and the National Fish and Wildlife Service (NFWS), noting that the energy directed toward this peninsula had already caused significant damage and a substantial fix would be needed.

As a former grant writer, Miller began to gather several state, federal, and private sources who all recognized the importance and impact of this erosion: The Golden Leaf Foundation (GLF), the USDA and NCDA (Emergency Watershed Protection), and the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ). The town was looking for a permanent



and comprehensive solution that would incorporate environmentally friendly solutions to withstand wave energy coming 77 miles directly from an opening in the Outer Banks, near Rodanthe. Before engaging partners, the town acquired the private land from owners who attempted to protect the shoreline in the past and realized the greater need. Once acquired, Quible Engineering and its project manager, Brian Rubino, worked closely with the town, Dr. Weaver, and all agencies to properly educate all parties on the erosion acceleration, the need for substantial structure, and the ongoing impact that would have led to the complete disappearance of the peninsula and the protection it afforded.

A comprehensive plan was developed in about one and a half years and funding totaling \$3,680,752 was secured by a combination of all agencies involved. The town secured the land for the cost of legal filings and used time and effort costs, but the entire cash cost of the project was borne by a combination of grants.

The work began in late 2021 to combine a Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) permitted project that included an 18 foot wide and 9 foot high granite sill along the forward-facing side of the peninsula, a wraparound granite sill of over 2,426 feet, approximately 1,200 linear feet of a bagged and loose oyster cultch sill on the back-facing side for stabilization, thousands of local marsh grasses, bracing structures at the required 100 foot dropdown to prevent erosion, and about 15,000 cubic yards of donated fill. Volunteer assistance from several North Carolina Universities' marine sciences programs and local residents assisted in the placement of oyster shell bags and cultch, provided labor for the placement of plants, both in the completion and the following spring planting season.

The project was completed after several unanticipated issues and adjustments that required lengthy comment periods with CAMA regarding modifications to the original permits. Miller brought in the USDA and NCDA to the project partway, as costs and requirements changed and the secured funding proved to be inadequate. This was not something that a town of 928 residents with a general operating budget of under \$2 million could absorb on its own. The team, in particular Dr. Weaver and Rubino, were extremely flexible and adapted throughout the project according to environmental signals coming from the reconstructed Pointe to ensure sustainability for generations to come.

The project was finally closed out and inspected by all agencies involved in December 2022, though an osprey relocation and adjustment to the project permit were ongoing as of March 2023. The project is also now acquiring additional land up to the sill and possibly beyond and is being used as a benchmark for sustainable restoration. It was an extremely difficult project, but a worthwhile one that will protect the residents, livelihoods, and environmental conditions of Oriental and its surrounding areas. **PM**

10,000-49,999 Population

KALISPELL CORE AND RAIL REDEVELOPMENT

Kalispell, Montana

Doug Russell, ICMA-CM, City Manager



Doug Russell

The Kalispell Core Area Redevelopment is a case study of an ambitious project that led to the removal of an active railroad line from Kalispell's center, the creation a new rail-served industrial business park, the creation of a 1.5 mile green belt with a dedicated bicycle and pedestrian path, and the redevelopment of numerous underutilized properties that are now home to three multi-family development facilities, a senior living facility, and mixed-use commercial and residential facilities. Ongoing for over 10 years, the project required a phased strategic progression to finish the public investment portion and facilitate private investment to meet the economic development goals of the plan.

In 2010, Kalispell and the Flathead County Economic Development Agency (FCEDA) leveraged a brownfield area-wide grant to identify possible development along a 1.5-mile railroad corridor that at the time only served two customers. The corridor, which ran through the middle of the city, divided the community and effectively limited development. The Core Area Steering Team led the planning grant and began a public outreach program to gather information about the community's priorities, needs, and limitations. The following were the major concerns expressed during this outreach:

- Removal of the railroad track (an active rail-line).
- Park development and green space replacing the rail track.
- Compatible mix of commercial and residential uses.



- Pedestrian/bicycle trail development.
- Sidewalk development and improvements.
- Street improvements and increased street connections.

This Core Area plan vision statement resulted from the outreach:

“The vision of Kalispell’s revitalized Core Area is to transform from an industrial-oriented center into a vibrant, pedestrian, mixed-use neighborhood, focusing upon retail, residential, entertainment, and cultural amenities designed to proudly and consistently complement the existing historical Kalispell downtown area.”

The initial cost estimate for the project was over \$21 million, which did not include relocation costs for the existing rail users. Of this amount, \$10 million was planned to come from the federal government’s Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program, and the city’s initial estimated contribution was \$4.5 million. By the end of the project, this contribution increased to over \$10 million due to acquisition and relocation costs impacting one partner, requiring the city to take on a larger role.

Agreements with the existing businesses were negotiated and arrangements were made for their relocation, and acquisition efforts were undertaken to acquire the rail-corridor and utilize the railbanking process through the Surface Transportation Board. Before the rail along the corridor could be removed, the city, FCEDA, the railroad, and the two active businesses worked together to design and build a new industrial park and relocate the current businesses without disrupting the businesses’ or the rail company’s economic activity.

With the completion of the industrial park, revitalization of the underutilized corridor was able to begin. Project bids were awarded, and construction occurred for this piece of the redevelopment plan in summer 2021. For the trail development, a community task force was formed to design the trail according to the interests of community, business, and service partners. This group, The Trail Crew, worked with city staff and engineers, ultimately recommending the design, features, logo, and name for the Parkline Trail.

Public investment in implementing the goals of the redevelopment plan laid the foundations for the revitalization of the area. The new Glacier Rail Park is home to the two existing businesses and the remaining lots have already been sold. The removal of the rail and development of the Parkline Trail has fulfilled the need for a pedestrian and bicycle green belt corridor and has initiated the reuse of many properties, including a 230-unit multifamily development that is reusing existing grain silos on a former agricultural site. At the opposite end of the trail, serving as an entryway into Kalispell, a large vacant lot is now the site of a 250-unit affordable luxury development. Between these developments, adjacent to the trail, there have been mixed-use developments constructed, commercial business developments, and a brewery open for business.



Over a 10-year period, there were many challenges to work through with federal agencies, businesses, local concerns, and new players. The city and its partners were able to focus on the strategic plan and long-term goals, providing stability and leading the project to success. A local newspaper described the project as a “trail of transformation,” with this quote at the start of the railroad track removal phase: “But the fruits of our patience and officials’ persistence in ushering in transformation are about to become far more visible and tangible this year.” (Reece, Myers. “Trail of Transformation.” *Flathead Beacon*, February 4, 2021.)

A few months later, with the 230-unit multi-family development in its initial construction stages, the same newspaper published a follow-up article with the following quote: “The historic core of the city is getting the attention it has long deserved because of the persistence of community leaders and a city council that stuck with the Kalispell Parkline project.... That watershed moment has finally arrived.” (Brown, Kellyn. “That ‘Watershed Moment’ is Here.” *Flathead Beacon*, May 27, 2021.) **PM**

50,000 and Greater Population

ROCK HILL COMMUNITY TOOLSHED PROGRAM**Rock Hill, South Carolina**

Lisa M. Brown, CGFO, MPA, Director of Strategy Management



Lisa M. Brown,
CGFO, MPA

The Rock Hill Community Toolshed Program, administered by the Neighborhood Empowerment division of Neighborhood Services of Rock Hill, encourages residents, neighborhood associations, and community organizations to borrow tools and equipment at no cost to beautify and maintain their communities. The toolshed's inventory includes lawnmowers, pressure washers, weed eaters, blowers, hedge trimmers, ladders, hand tools, wheelbarrows, shovels, painting equipment, and more.

The Community Toolshed was born out of a challenge faced by most communities: how to maintain the appearance and condition of housing stock and their lots. The Neighborhood Inspections Team found violations of the International Property Maintenance Code, such as overgrown grass and disrepair to home exteriors. Residents often lack the resources to correct the violations. Often-times, residents cited for violations lacked the proper or functioning equipment necessary to remediate the situation or the ability to pay for professional services. Similarly, neighborhood associations and homeowner associations (HOAs) lacked the equipment necessary for community cleanups and beautification projects.

After assessing what the city had access to and in inventory, it was realized that much of what was needed was available from community painting and repair projects managed by Neighborhood Development and Neighborhood Empowerment. The neighborhood inspections group had trucks that could pull a mobile toolshed, the communications team designed a vehicle wrap for an enclosed trailer that could be used for both storage and advertising at community events, and electric lawn tools were purchased to supplement the

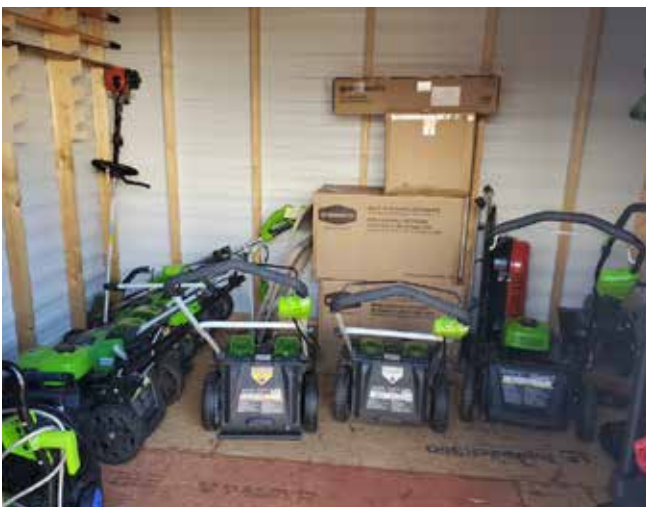


existing inventory. Electric tools were purchased for environmental reasons and to encourage the use of electric/battery powered tools in an electric utility city. The toolshed inventory is driven by residents, with additional equipment procured based on user demand. In 2017, the program was launched for less than \$10,000, with an average cost of less than \$900 per year to maintain tools and equipment and expand inventory.

The program aimed to lessen the burden on code enforcement, increase voluntary compliance for minor violations, preserve housing stock, and improve community engagement. The latter is harder to measure and define, but the reductions in code violations confirmed the program's success. In 2016, there were 1,718 overgrown lot violations. Following a slow rollout of the program in summer 2017, there were 1,712 overgrown lot violations. Starting in early 2018, a more substantial marketing of the program led to a significant decline in overgrown lot violations, dropping 34% to only 1,137 in 2022.

The benefit goes beyond property appearance. It also made code enforcement more efficient, lessening time required on overgrown lot cases. Maintaining the balance of keeping a well-kept community without residents feeling their individual rights are infringed upon is difficult. By offering a solution to code issues, residents can achieve compliance in a cost-effective manner. A community's outward appearance also impacts its appeal to existing and prospective residents and businesses.

The city's strategic plan is centered around three initiatives: serving, engaging, and growing. Under "serving," improving the well-being of neighborhoods is specifically listed, including increasing voluntary compliance for code enforcement issues. Under "engaging," they work to "encourage civic pride" and "foster community building," and the Community Toolshed encourages and allows all residents to engage in civic pride. **PM**



STRATEGIC Leadership & Governance

Under 10,000 Population

MARC (MANAGEMENT, ACCESS, AND RECORDS COMPLIANCE)

Bondurant, Iowa

Marketa Oliver, City Administrator

Shelby Hagan, City Clerk



Marketa Oliver Shelby Hagan

In 2018, Bondurant experienced a transformational period. Multiple organizational leaders were new to their roles, and as one of the fastest growing communities in Iowa, the city was too far behind on e-commerce,

automation, and records management. Due to their rapid growth, records compliance became a critical strategic priority. The city had the need and goal to create and maintain a sustainable and economical citywide records management system to control the creation and growth of records, reduce operating costs, improve efficiency and productivity, and ensure regulatory compliance.

With an innovative and technologically savvy administrative team, in October 2018, what would later be dubbed the Management, Access, and Record Compliance (MARC) program was launched. After determining which records were needed for historical documentation or administrative value, the city clerk reviewed multiple options for electronic filing systems and selected one that was intuitive and integrated well with the city's financial software. In July 2019, the city council approved a contract for a \$2,035 one-time expense and \$9,820 of recurring fees for document repository and management, framework for process automation, and information management solutions (renegotiated in June 2020, saving \$6,000). If the city had not made efforts in 2018 to modernize financial and records processes, the impact of the pandemic on their ability to deliver services would have been very different, and this new norm further highlighted the need for a simplified electronic system of records management.

In January 2022, the city adopted a revised records retention schedule and established an electronic imaging and destruction of records and documents policy. These policies addressed the "management" and "compliance" issues in the MARC goal, but it was the invention of the standardized naming convention that was truly innovative and addressed the "access" goal of the MARC program.

The city clerk took the concept of the uniform chart of accounts for revenue and expense reporting and created a uniform chart of records. She developed a standardized filing procedure and a uniform naming convention that syncs with the state records retention requirements. To provide exceptional service as a legal custodian, the city follows the following guiding principles:

1. Observe the records retention schedule policies and Iowa Code. All stewards will maintain a dependable, complete, and accessible records management system.
2. Balance the need to access records in the future with storage costs and efficient use of space and time. Be responsible for "one official copy."
3. Commit to openness of records and meet customers' demands, while adhering to legal requirements.
4. Annually review and recommend improvement to the current records retention schedule and system. The creation of this system has made it easier to automate record storage and retrieval.

Beginning in 2022, Bondurant adopted electronic document signing, which further automated records retention and streamlined the post-council follow-up work, and required a \$600 annual investment for software. In 2022, the city also launched CivicClerk for its agenda platform, which works with the records retention and signing software, costing approximately \$4,700 annually.

The challenge of having enough resources to meet needs is a common one for all communities, but it is even more difficult in small, growing communities. Priorities compete for resources, and when there is a need for additional public safety and the expansion of administrative services, administration is a secondary priority, requiring more to be done with less. Automating recordkeeping has enabled the city to continue to function well with only one staff member. The new system allows the city to pull records in minutes instead of days, provides a platform for future expansion, and eliminates the need for additional physical space. **PM**



10,000-49,999 Population

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Lancaster, Texas

Opal Mauldin-Jones, City Manager

Opal
Mauldin-Jones

Lancaster University (LU), with full support from the city council, began in 2017. Envisioned as a leadership program that would focus on leadership development at all organizational levels, LU focuses primarily on customer service, professional development, financial wellness, physical wellness, mental wellness, volunteerism, diversity, equity, and inclusion, risk management, policy and procedure reinforcement, and fellowship.

In every organization, the executive leadership attends conferences regularly. However, most employees never have the chance to attend one. Police officers, firefighters, dispatchers, maintenance workers, equipment operators, administrative staff, and recreation staff oftentimes only hear about conferences when management returns.

LU offers a morning, midday, and closing keynote speaker, as well as several breakout sessions. Throughout the day, employees are also able to enjoy various activities, such as character drawings, photo opportunities, balloon art, exercise, food, retirement vendors, and fellowship. Emergency response personnel can participate in the event because the city is closed to the public and neighboring cities provide public safety support as much as they can. Public safety personnel still attend to the needs of residents, but they can come and go at their leisure during LU.

It is the human resources department's responsibility, in collaboration with the city manager, to organize and implement the annual



conference. Planned years in advance, LU is hosted at the local community college, allowing the use of a large theater for keynote speakers and classrooms for breakout sessions. Depending on the speaker fees and growth in the employee population, the city spends an average of \$25,000 to 35,000 annually.

More than a day off for employees, LU is a day to reinforce and strengthen the culture in Lancaster. Clearly defining the organizational culture of an organization leads to the success of the organization itself and the success of its employees. When organizational culture is undefined, the organization suffers and productivity drastically falls; however, when organizational culture is defined, productivity increases, along with job satisfaction, engagement, and trust (Meng & Berger, 2019). LU was created to prevent employee dissatisfaction and reduce the ever-present challenge of employee turnover in local government.

Through an annual employee survey to monitor engagement metrics, which follows a model recommended by Commonwealth Centers for High-performance Organizations, the city has seen increased employee participation and morale, demonstrating LU's positive impact on organizational culture.

A pilot program for local government awareness, LU acts as a catalyst for awareness in the larger community. Founded on the principles of succession planning, and generated by City Manager Opal Mauldin-Jones, LU informs and educates local government employees, who can then share their knowledge with family and friends.

Reference: Meng, J., & Berger, B. K. (2019). The impact of organizational culture and leadership performance on PR professionals' job satisfaction: Testing the joint mediating effects of engagement and trust. *Public Relations Review*, 45, 64-75. **PM**



50,000 and Greater Population

RC CARES PROGRAM

Rancho Cucamonga, California

John R. Gillison, City Manager



John R. Gillison

Rancho Cucamonga's human resources (HR) department collaborates as a strategic partner with all city departments to assist in developing and maintaining a diverse, high-quality workforce that supports and fosters a dynamic, meaningful, and customer-oriented environment for Team Rancho Cucamonga (Team RC) members. They support and encourage employees to find innovative ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the city to achieve optimal success. In partnership with all city departments, they support a continuous learning environment for employees to help them achieve an enriching employee experience.

The RC Cares Program is one initiative that demonstrates the city's commitment to continual learning. This program grew out of the organizational development initiatives undertaken by the HR department, drew on the strengths of cross-functional teams, and has enabled HR to contribute to employees beyond their traditional roles.

The RC Cares Program was created in fall 2018 to assist parents and caretakers who have competing priorities and want to improve their work-life integration. The intention is to assist employees with short-term and/or immediate dependent care needs, which could otherwise result in their missing work. The Child Care Challenges Committee, led by HR, developed this program based on the input, discussion, and research of the committee. Employees can utilize the program through a variety of channels:

Care 2 Share Group: A private group allowing participating employees a forum to share drop-off and pick-up information. For example, if a parent must leave work to pick up their child from school at 11:30 a.m. each day, there may be other parents following a similar schedule. This forum allows parents to see if other city staff have similar drop-off and pick-up times and locations, creating a community of support for Team RC parents.

Payroll Deduction/Reimbursement for Camp Cucamonga: The summer camp program offered by the city usually begins in early June and ends in late July of each year. The camp hours are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. with weekly fees based on the child's age. The payroll deduction option allows the day camp to be purchased in advance by the city so that Team RC children can attend camp in the summer. The employees then pay back the city through a post-tax payroll deduction. This gives Team RC parents the ability to spread out camp fees throughout the fiscal year instead of one lump sum at the beginning of summer.



Alternative Work Schedules: These enable employees to select and alter their work schedules to better support personal needs and help balance and integrate work, personal, and family responsibilities. Within the alternative work schedule, staff can choose 4/10, 9/80, or other schedule options for completing their 40-hour work week. Staff also have the option to choose flextime, which allows the employee to work the traditional 40-hour work week with the option to establish varying start and end times for their day.

Remote Work: This allows employees to select a day of the week that they may not be able to physically come into the office, but with pre-planning can take work projects home to complete during their normal working hours.

RC Caregivers Network: A group offered to employees who need support or would like to share information and ideas. This group opens a network of communication between employees who also face work-life integration challenges and can better understand and support one another.

Bring Your Kid(s) To Work (BYKTW): There are many times when childcare is not available, and employees need to bring their child to work or take time off to provide the necessary care. Under this component of the program, employees may bring their child or children to work for half

or full days on a more than occasional basis for limited periods of time.

“Baby on Board” Program: This allows new parents to return to work sooner by permitting the new parents to bring their baby to work with them. Babies can remain in the workplace until the baby is eight months old or begins to crawl, whichever comes first. This employee program allows the participants to make a smooth transition back into the workforce by providing them with the resources and opportunities they need to better balance their personal lives and professional duties. Participants can be either full-time or part-time employees, subject to the specific job responsibilities of the parent and subject to ensuring the physical safety of the baby. Supervisor, department director, and HR director approval is also required.

For employees who are new mothers, the city provides a mother’s room, which offers a safe and calm space for breastfeeding or pumping. Returning to work as a new mother who is breastfeeding can present a unique set of challenges for

the employee. By providing a private, clean, and comfortable room for new mothers to breastfeed or pump, this return to work can be made much smoother. Private from all other city employees, the mother’s room is completely clean and sanitary, provides comfortable sitting options such as a rocking chair, has calm and ambient lighting if desired, has easy to access outlets for needed equipment, and clear surfaces for a variety of uses.

The RC Cares Program is an example of what human resources can do when senior staff are committed to fostering a positive work-life integration and employee environment: an environment that encourages employees and departments to create and innovate programs; where employees can contribute their ideas and make a difference in the organization by having their own seat at the table; and where innovation, communication, and employee feedback can create a foundation to further support and encourage employees while promoting trust, productivity, collaboration, retention, and the city’s values. **PM**



Rancho Cucamonga Human Resources Department

Pamela Brangaccio

National Coordinator for Senior Advisors, ICMA

Pamela Brangaccio has had a successful, 40-year career serving Florida cities and counties, beginning in 1979 and continuing to retirement in 2019 as the city manager in New Smyrna Beach.

In her position as New Smyrna Beach city manager, she developed a community engagement strategic planning process that was embraced by the community and city commission. The process used a four-part “Listening and Learning” values approach that resulted in an actionable plan for decision making. The approach was subsequently modeled in other Florida cities and a modified version was transformed into strategic planning recommendations through the Florida Institute of Government.

She continues to be extremely involved in the community. She is past president of the New Smyrna Beach Rotary Club and currently president of the Gulf Beaches Rotary Club. She volunteers for the city of Treasure Island and the city commission appointed her to the Planning and Zoning Board, where she recently completed her term. Her calm leadership has completely changed the tenor of the board and the work they produce.

Brangaccio assisted in developing and launching the initial Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) Members in Transition (MIT) program. She has been recognized by FCCMA no less than three times with Life Saver awards for assisting MITs. She served FCCMA on the membership committee and fiscal and administrative responsibility committee, among others. She is a member of the Past Presidents’ Council, which sponsors scholarships and programming for annual conferences. She routinely participates in program development and conference sessions on a variety of priority topics.

On many occasions, she served as an instructor for the Florida League of Cities Institute for Elected Municipal Officials I and II, both of which are intensive academic programs on local government responsibilities in Florida. She also served as a guest instructor and lecturer at the University of Central Florida on public administration and policy topics for undergraduate classes and the Master of Public Administration Program.

Brangaccio served numerous years on the ICMA Credentialing Advisory Board and is presently participating in the ICMA Legacy Leaders Program and as an ICMA leadership development mentor. She has worked with MITs and as coached many first-time managers in Florida and beyond. She serves as an informal advisor member with the Pinellas County Women in Local Government group and is always available to provide a listening ear and support. As an ICMA senior advisor, she supports, coaches, and mentors local government professionals around



the country. She was also among the earliest women managers in Florida to serve in a leadership role and has always embraced the opportunity to support others.

Brangaccio has and continues to serve on a variety of task forces and committees with both ICMA and FCCMA. She is presently serving as the ICMA national coordinator for senior advisors and is working to create standards and strategies to facilitate and assist senior advisors in the work of supporting local governments. She has been a previous panelist multiple times for the FCCMA pre-conference workshop, “So You’re Going to Be a City or County Manager.” Finally, she is an inaugural member and integral to efforts to create an ICMA Women Leading Government chapter.

Brangaccio is a champion for professional local government and a cheerleader for everyone working to make communities better places to live and work. She optimizes the ICMA “Life Well Run” philosophy and deserves acknowledgement of her many, many years of service and contributions to so many city and county employees and communities. **PM**

Robert J. O'Neill Jr.

Executive in Residence, College of Charleston

Leadership, professional development, mentoring and strategic visioning have been primary and consistent themes during Robert O'Neill's stellar career in public service. He began work as a management intern and rose to leadership positions on the local, national, and international levels. The seeds he planted along the way continue to benefit residents, the local government profession, and city and county leaders.

Early in his career, while city manager in Hampton, Virginia, Bob was a leading proponent of the new public management theory of administration. He created a high-performance organization in Hampton that improved efficiency and economy, fostered organizational effectiveness, and promoted government accountability and transparency. One example of his innovative practices as city manager was a partnership between the city of Hampton and a residential neighborhood. This partnership, negotiated by Bob with residents, created a neighborhood center where the city maintained an historic African American school building and community volunteers provided programming. This initiative, begun in the mid-1980s, continues to this day. It is an early example of what is now known as the "coproduction of public work."

When Bob left Hampton for the position of county executive in Fairfax County, Virginia, it was clear that he was the ideal person for this large, complex, demanding organization. There, even at that level and scale of government, with intense politics and media scrutiny, Bob continued to stress high performance, innovation, and the development of the staff's collective and individual capacities. During his tenure in Virginia, Bob was instrumental in shaping the Virginia Local Government Management Association into one of the most effective state associations in the United States.

After his tenure in Fairfax County, Bob took on a national leadership role as the president of the National Academy of Public Administration. He was instrumental in turning the attention of the association toward local government, enabling them to significantly expand recognition and membership to local government staff and public policy scholars.

As ICMA executive director for over a decade, Bob created the Leadership Advisory Board. He recognized that ICMA, whose mission is to create the best leaders, didn't have a committee focused on leadership. The first task was to draft a definition of the term *leadership* as it applies to local government management, and then develop an array of leadership programs and professional development training. Realizing the importance of building a pipeline, and knowing from his own experience the value of mentorship, Bob established the highly successful ICMA Fellows program, ensuring top public

administration students received a firm foundation in local government excellence as they began their careers. In addition, he established ICMA Student Chapters at MPA programs across the country to promote the profession and provide guidance to students from local government managers. His development of leadership programs such as the Emerging Leaders Development Program and Leadership ICMA provided training and valuable contacts to young professionals.

One of Bob's lasting contributions has been his thought leadership. He has spoken and written extensively on behalf of professionalism, local government leadership, and management. He has always been willing to engage with members of the profession. Bob has willingly shared his knowledge and wisdom with others at the Senior Executive Institute (SEI) at the University of Virginia, where he served as faculty. SEI's leadership development and training programs, where many ICMA members are graduates, have benefited from Bob's teaching.

Bob has also served on the board of directors for ICMA-RC (now MissionSquare Retirement) and chaired the ICMA-RC/MissionSquare Vantagepoint Board.

He is now the executive in residence and fellow for the Joseph P Riley Jr. Center for Livable Communities at the College of Charleston, as well as the first Harrell-Hutchinson visiting urban management professional at Arizona State University. These connections are an expression of his continued effort to connect theory to practice with city and county management.

Bob has been a friend and mentor to many who attribute their success to his influence, counsel, and guidance. An innovator and thought leader, Bob advocated a vision of local government leadership and management beyond its inward focus on government operations. He inspired new generations of city/county managers to work in more democratic and collaborative ways with nongovernmental organizations, including business leaders and the public, to promote democracy and add value to community life. His courageous—and at times, controversial—positions have strengthened the profession, ensuring relevance and responsiveness during changing times and conditions. **PM**



L. Kimball Payne III

Senior Advisor, ICMA

L Kimball (“Kim”) Payne III first served Spotsylvania County, Virginia, as assistant county administrator beginning in 1984, and was then hired as county administrator in 1987, serving in that role for 14 years. During most of his tenure in Spotsylvania County, he concurrently served as a commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve. In 2001, Kim became city manager for Lynchburg, Virginia, and served in that capacity until his retirement in 2016. Prior to beginning his local government career, Kim completed nearly eight years of active duty as a naval flight officer with his last assignment as a Naval ROTC instructor at the University of Virginia.

Kim is a consistent leader in regional, state, and national management associations. He is an ICMA senior advisor and is active in Coach Connect. He is also a Rotarian and serves on the board of a number of regional entities, including the United Way of Central Virginia, Lynchburg Grows, the Lynchburg City Schools Education Foundation, the Central Virginia Community College Educational Foundation, and the James River Association. Further, Kim is active in his church, serving as a eucharistic minister and on the building and finance committees.

Kim was one of the inaugural instructors of the Virginia Tech Local Government Management Graduate Certificate Program, where he taught as an adjunct faculty member for 15 years until his retirement after the fall 2022 semester. When the program was founded in 2008, in partnership with the Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA), Kim enthusiastically agreed to share his experience and wisdom with future generations of local government managers. He served the program as an advisor, assisted with developing courses, contributed to content enhancements, and promoted the program in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Kim also facilitated the VLGMA Scholarship Fund being permanently held and overseen by the Lynchburg Community Foundation, which greatly supports the ongoing work of the Virginia Tech Local Government Management Graduate Certificate Program and its students. The scholarship fund has been key to broadening the accessibility and reach of the certificate program to mid-career professionals and graduate students.

Additionally, Kim is a mentor to scores of local government professionals and is always available to take a call, answer an email, or find time to meet. He is both a formal and informal mentor to countless local government professionals in all stages of life.

Since his retirement from city management, Kim has continued to impact communities by leading executive searches, board and



council retreats, and strategic plans as a part-time consultant with the Berkley Group. Most recently, Kim led executive searches for the Virginia counties of Gloucester, Grayson, Pittsylvania, and Roanoke, as well as the George Washington Regional Commission. He also has led board and council retreats for Virginia localities such as Augusta County, Shenandoah County, and the towns of Abingdon, Altavista, Colonial Beach, Crewe, Farmville, Leesburg, South Hill, and Strasburg.

Kim also served as interim town manager of Amherst, Virginia, lending tangible support to the town and a colleague.

His expertise in the council-manager form of government smoothly guides communities through the interim leadership period and helps them develop strategies consistent with the mission and vision of their community.

Within the broader community, Kim is often the first person contacted for advice and support in new endeavors and controversial public matters. An example includes his research and presentation of information in handling issues surrounding publicly displayed historical statues. **PM**

Sheryl Sculley

Sheryl Sculley has been an active member of ICMA for more than 45 years. Most notably, she served as city manager of San Antonio, Texas, from 2005 to 2019. There she functioned as the chief executive officer of the municipal corporation with 13,000 employees, an annual operating and capital budget of \$2.8 billion, and a city population of 1.5 million residents.

Sculley was recruited to San Antonio to undertake an organizational turn-around and improve the professionalism of city government. The team she assembled to lead the city of San Antonio enabled the city to become one of the highest performing municipal governments in the nation, and the only city with a population of more than one million to consistently earn AAA bond ratings from the three major financial rating service agencies.

Her impact goes way beyond the numbers. In partnership with the elected officials of San Antonio, she helped design and implement PreK4SA, one of the most ambitious early childhood education programs in the country. High-quality, all-day pre-kindergarten is now approaching universal adoption in San Antonio. During her 14-year tenure as city manager, she led the effort to undertake more than \$3 billion in infrastructure improvements for the community, regained public trust through strong ethical practices, and systematically reshaped government operations in all city departments.

Sculley is a life member of ICMA and a fellow in the National Academy of Public Administration. She is also an adjunct professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin. Her commitment to next generation leadership in local government spans several decades as a university professor and university and high school guest speaker on public administration. In San Antonio, she implemented a fellowship program for MPA graduates that has become one of the most sought-after fellowships in the country.

Post retirement, she continues her commitment by serving on the San Antonio Early Matters Board, the Board of the Texas Biomedical Research Institute, the Texas 2036 Board, the PN-3 Texas Business Advisory Board, and the Downtown Austin Alliance Board. In addition to her extensive volunteer work, Sculley joined the MGIC (NYSE: MTG) corporate board in October 2019, a company whose mission is to support affordable housing.

Sculley gained national attention for dealing with unsustainable benefits for San Antonio's police and fire unions, and in doing so, steered the city away from a future



financial crisis. In 2020, she authored and published a book on leadership and her city experience in San Antonio, *Greedy Bastards: One City's Texas Size Struggle to Avoid a Financial Crisis*, which made the Amazon #1 Best Seller list. She frequently speaks at ICMA state and local meetings and conferences discussing her book. **PM**

CELEBRATION OF SERVICE

In recognition of ICMA members' years of public service, these members will be presented awards in 2023.

55-Year SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENT

Joseph O. D'Arco, township manager of Verona, New Jersey, has served in New Jersey since the start of his career. He was borough administrator in Paramus (2010-2022), city administrator in Kearney (2000-2010), borough manager in Sayreville (1994-2000), village administrator in South Orange Township (1988-1994), business administrator in Rockaway Township (1987), township administrator in Caldwell (1982-1987), health officer/director in Bloomfield Township (1975-1982), assistant health officer in Paramus (1971-1975), and registered environmental health specialist in Bergen (1967-1971).

50-Year SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Charles F. Dodge, city manager of Pembroke Pines, Florida, has devoted his career to the city. He was assistant city manager (1983-1989), city clerk (1979-1983), code enforcement director (1977-1979), and community services director (1975-1977).

David Stuart, chief administrative officer of North Vancouver District, British Columbia, has served his entire career in the province. He was chief administrative officer in West Vancouver District (2000-2007), human resources/corporate services director in North Vancouver District (1983-2000), human resources officer in Surrey (1981-1983), and human resources officer in North Vancouver District (1973-1980).

Dale M. Walker, assistant city manager of Crescent City, Florida, has also served as chief administrative officer (2012-2017) and director of finance (2011-2012) in Macon, Georgia, director of finance in Suffolk, Virginia (2009-2011), chief financial officer for the District of Columbia Retirement Board (2008-2009), deputy city manager/director of finance in Cadillac, Michigan (1977-2007), and finance director in Owosso, Michigan (1970-1975).

45-Year

SERVICE AWARD

RECIPIENTS

Robert M. Belmore, city manager of Somersworth, New Hampshire, also served as the city's director of development services (2001-2005), executive assistant in Newington, New Hampshire (2000-2001), town manager in Plaistow, New Hampshire (1995-2000), executive administrator in Milton, New Hampshire (1991-1993), town administrator, New Durham, New Hampshire (1988-1991), police officer in Dover (1980-1987), and police dispatcher in Boston, Massachusetts (1975-1980).

William Cmorey, director of administration of Bensalem, Pennsylvania, previously served the township as director of community development (1986-2007), acting township manager (1985-1986), director of community development (1984-1985), and public works coordinator/foreman (1978-1984).

Stephen N. Cole, city manager of Black Hawk, Colorado, previously served the city as police chief (2005-2018), police chief in Northglenn, Colorado (2002-2004), and officer/deputy chief in Wichita, Kansas (1978-2002).

Roger W. Fraser, village administrator of Franklin, Michigan, previously served as county administrator in Cass County, Michigan (2014-2015), city administrator in Ann Arbor, Michigan (2002-2011), city manager in Blaine, Minnesota (1996-2002), city manager in Loveland, Colorado (1993-1995), city manager in Englewood, Colorado (1989-1993), deputy city manager (1984-1989), director of administrative services (1984), and personnel director in Aurora, Colorado (1979-1984), personnel director in Muskegon County, Michigan (1975-1979), senior personnel technician in Oakland County, Michigan (1969-1975), and public welfare worker in Wayne County, Michigan (1968-1969).

Stuart Jardine most recently served as the chief executive officer for Stirling, Western Australia from 2007 until June 2023. He previously served as chief executive officer (2001-2007) and director of strategic planning (1997-2001) in Gosnells, Western Australia, head of urban regeneration and senior executive officer in Burnley, United Kingdom (1990-1996, 1984-1990), and senior policy advisor in Craven, United Kingdom (1979-1981).

Sam A. Listi, city manager of Belton, Texas, since 2001 has served most of his career in Texas. He previously served as assistant city manager/director of city planning in Temple (1986-2001), assistant planning director in

Midland (1981-1986), and city planner in Denton (1976-1979).

Michael G. Mahaney currently serves as the city manager of North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. He previously served as city manager in Deerfield Beach, Florida (2007-2010), county administrator in Nassau County, Florida (2004-2007), city manager in Kannapolis, North Carolina (2002-2004), city manager in St. Mary's, Georgia (1990-2002), city manager in Covington, Virginia (1986-1990), borough manager in Somerset, Pennsylvania (1981-1986), assistant city manager/director of public works (1980-1981) and director of public works and engineering (1979-1980) in Oberlin, Ohio, and assistant director of public works and engineering in Falls Church, Virginia (1978-1979).

Charles P. McClendon currently serves as the city manager of Cathedral City, California. Previously, he served as city manager (2004-2014) and assistant city manager (2002-2004) in Avondale, Arizona, management and budget director (1992-2002), senior management assistant (1989-1992), and human resources analyst (1985-1989) in Glendale, Arizona, and personnel analyst/manager in Lexington-Fayette, Kentucky (1978-1985).

Susan S. Muranishi, county administrator of Alameda County, has devoted her entire career to the county, serving as interim county administrator (1995), assistant county administrator (1989-1995), principal administrative analyst (1981-1988), and administrative analyst (1979-1980).

Cindy Cameron Ogle, city manager of Gatlinburg, Tennessee, previously served as the assistant city manager (1978-1988).

Robert M. Pellegrino, township manager of Northampton, Pennsylvania, has served most of his career in the state. He previously served as township manager in Newtown Township (2001-2007), deputy executive director/health plan administrator for the Delaware Valley Municipal Management Association (1999-2001), township manager in Warrenton Township (1996-1999), township manager in Upper Southampton Township (1986-1992), borough manager (1981-1986) and assistant borough manager in Doylestown (1980-1981), assistant borough manager and assistant to the manager in Whitpain (1978-1980). He also served as town administrator in Hopewell, New Jersey (1992-1996).

Steven L. Schainker, city manager of Ames, Iowa, previously served as the assistant city manager (1979-1982). Before his career in Iowa, he served as budget systems analyst in Kansas City, Missouri (1978-1979).

William L. Sorah recently retired as the city manager of Bristol, Tennessee. Before moving to Tennessee, he served another Bristol—Bristol, Virginia—for many years as deputy city manager

(1991-2014), purchasing agent (1989-1991), assistant director of parks and recreation (1979-1989), and parks superintendent (1977-1979).

Richard Sun, director general of Hampstead, Quebec, has served his entire career in Quebec. He was director of administrative services in Montreal (2002-2005), treasurer in Cote Saint-Luc (1990-2002), and accountant/controller in Mt. Royal (1979-1990).

Randolph D. Terronez is the current assistant to the county administrator of Rock County, Wisconsin. He also served as county administrator in Iowa County, Wisconsin (2007-2009). In Michigan, he served as county administrator in Clare County (2002-2007), county administrator in Kalamazoo County (1998-2001), county administrator in Jackson County (1993-1998), and county administrator in Isabella County (1984-1992). In Iowa, he served Scott County as administrative assistant/EEO officer (1981-1984) and administrative analyst/EEO officer (1979-1981).

Russell G. Treadway is the current city administrator of Sevierville, Tennessee. He was also city manager in Snellville, Georgia (2008-2012), city manager in Elizabethton, Tennessee (2006-2007), city administrator in Mauldin, South Carolina (2001-2006), director of administration (1996-1998) and director of human resources (1994-1996) in Knox County, Tennessee, assistant city manager in Johnson City, Tennessee (1993-1994), and city administrator in Sevierville, Tennessee (1978-1993).

Mark S. Watson serves as the city manager of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. He was also city administrator in Yuma, Arizona (2005-2010), city manager in Temple, Texas (1999-2004), city administrator in Billings, Montana (1993-1999), city manager in Grapevine, Texas (1989-1992), city manager in Mission, Texas (1985-1989), city manager in Stamford, Texas (1981-1985), assistant to the city manager in Wichita Falls, Texas (1978-1981), administrative assistant in University Park, Texas (1977-1978), and management aide in Overland Park, Kansas (1976).

Gary L. Whatcott served a long career in South Jordan City, Utah, most recently as city manager (2014-2023). He was also interim city manager (2014), assistant city manager (2002-2014), and fire chief (1992-2002). He also worked in public safety in West Jordan City, Utah (1977-1991).

Erroll G. Williams, current tax assessor of New Orleans, Louisiana, has devoted his entire career to the city. He was chief administrative officer (1984-1986), finance director (1979-1984), acting finance director (1978-1979), and deputy finance director (1978).

40-Year

SERVICE AWARD

RECIPIENTS

Leroy D. Alsup
City Manager
Guthrie, Oklahoma

David Dale Ashburn
Town Manager
Red Springs, North Carolina

Rodney D. Barnes
Town Administrator
Edmonston, Maryland

Keith Bennett
Housing Program Administrator
Carson, California

Michael Cain
City Manager
Boyne City, Michigan

David N. Carmany
City Manager
West Covina, California

Pamela S. Caskie
City Administrator
Spring Hill, Tennessee

June W. Catalano
City Manager
Pleasant Hill, California

Ava L. Couch
Town Manager
Mount Royal, Quebec, Canada

Anthony W. Cox, ICMA-CM
City Administrator
Morristown, Tennessee

Kaj Dentler
Town Manager
Leesburg, Virginia

Michael G. Dzuga
City Manager
Wheaton, Illinois

Mike Etienne
Assistant City Manager
Victoria, Texas

Michael Oliver Geisel
City Administrator
Chesterfield, Missouri

Judith A. Gilleland, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Germantown, Ohio

Beverly Habada
Town Administrator
Capitol Heights, Maryland

Robert D. Herron Jr.
City Manager
Wheeling, West Virginia

Daniel E. Hoins
County Administrator
Sarpy, Nebraska

Clayton L. Holstine
City Manager
Brisbane, California

R. Thomas Homan, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Delaware, Ohio

Harlan L. Jefferson
Prosper, Texas

William G. Keegan Jr., ICMA-CM
Seekonk, Massachusetts
J. Clay Killian
Columbia, South Carolina

Gary J. Koehler
Borough Manager
Fox Chapel, Pennsylvania

Scot F. Lahrmer
Village Manager
Amberley, Ohio

John D. Marquart
Trenton, Illinois

Mark A. Mitton, ICMA-CM
City Administrator
Burley, Idaho

William A. Morse
City Manager
Toccoa, Georgia

Wayne C. Parker, ICMA-CM
Chief Administrative Officer
Provo, Utah

Charles W. Penny, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Statesboro, Georgia

Jeffrey A. Pomeranz
City Manager
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Roman M. Pronczak
Township Manager
Blue Bell, Pennsylvania

Mark A. Rohloff
City Manager
Oshkosh, Wisconsin

John R. Searles
County Administrator
Cattaraugus, New York

Jay L. Singleton
Administrator
Fort Worth, Texas

Scott C. Stiles
City Manager
Palm Springs, California

Patrick J. Thompson
County Administrator
Winnebago, Illinois

David G. Timmons
Executive Director
Port Townsend, Washington

Howard N. Tipton
Town Manager
Longboat Key, Florida

Russell Van Gompel
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Hispanic Voices in Local Government:

Building Inclusion into a Changing Workplace

In celebration of National Hispanic Heritage Month, members of the Local Government Hispanic Network share their perspectives.

BY SAMANTHA TAVARES

The local government workplace, long a locus of stability, is in flux like never before. With the arrival of Generation Z (Gen Z) employees, there are now four generations—millennials, Generation X, and baby boomers, as well as Gen Z—with vastly different outlooks and expectations working alongside each other.

As baby boomers retire and more than half of state and local workers are thinking of leaving their jobs,¹ cities and counties are faced with the challenge of attracting younger workers who don't respond to the same recruitment strategies that have worked on their predecessors. Diversity and inclusion are more important to workers than ever, but the how and why of diversity efforts vary widely based on age, race, ethnicity, geography, gender, and other factors. With the lingering impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid



Attendees of a Juntos Colorado (LGHN's Colorado Chapter) quarterly meeting and fundraiser. Photo provided by Joe Camacho.

technological changes added to the mix, local governments face both challenges and opportunities that will determine what they will look like and how they will operate for years to come.

As we observe National Hispanic Heritage Month, we spoke with members of the Local Government Hispanic Network (LGHN) for their perspectives on the state of the local government workplace,

why they chose public service, and what everyone can do to strengthen the profession. With Hispanic and Latino populations growing quickly in communities across the United States, LGHN

advocates for and advances the development of public service professionals at the local level, serving to create programs and services that address issues of importance to the Hispanic/Latino population. We spoke with members who have been in local government from a few years to a few decades, representing a range of generations and geographical locations, to hear their observations about the state of local government and how to make the workplace more welcoming, diverse, and effective for employees and the communities they serve.

Diana Gallego



As manager for human resources and workforce development for Tallahassee, Florida, with responsibilities that include recruitment, benefits, safety and wellness, Diana Gallego has a unique understanding of the challenges local governments face. And as a millennial Latina, she understands that an inclusive, welcoming workplace is key to the city's recruitment and retention efforts, especially for younger people just entering the workforce.

"I'm mindful there are differences between generations, which contributes to my personal expectation of inclusion in the workplace," Gallego says. "My city's leadership values diversity and makes an effort to promote equity, celebrate diversity, and respect differences."

But those values are just the start of the work instead of the end result, Gallego notes. "We need to think about how we embed our values into the processes so they don't fall through the cracks. If your goal is to hire diverse candidates, what do you do about it? One way to do this is by establishing a diverse hiring panel with representatives from various groups—gender, race, ethnicity, and age."

For Gallego, a comparison to private-sector hiring shows that the public sector has a ways to go when it comes to marketing itself and the positions it offers, even though it can compete well on the purpose, value, and meaning of the work. She notes that many private-sector organizations are ahead of local government when it comes to understanding what's important to workers, conveying the benefits of working with them, and building a brand that resonates with job seekers.

"As local governments, we have an inherent challenge when it comes to attracting younger talent. We do better leaning into the branding of our organizations and strategically getting the message out about who we are," she says. "While older workers typically place a high value on pensions and benefits, younger workers want to find meaningful work and be able to try different things before they settle into something they want to do for a while. It's a balance to resonate with these diverse audiences."

As a millennial navigating the local government workplace, Gallego has found value in belonging to LGHN and appreciates the benefits it offers members in organizations across the country.

"It's a network where most of the members are past the 10-

year mark in local government, so they've been through a lot," Gallego says. "When I'm going through a difficult situation and weighing pros and cons, I pick up the phone, and they're always happy to share their experience."

Rolando Fernandez



Rolando Fernandez came to local government after another stint in public service as a member of the U.S. Air Force—a transition that continues to influence how he sees his work for the city of Austin. For him, it's important to develop a shared vision and mission, an understanding of the task at hand, and what the end result should look like. Once everyone on the team has committed to the mission, that's when the different perspectives that team members bring become critical to success.

"In the military, you work with people of all ages, ethnicities, and backgrounds," says Fernandez, who serves as deputy director for the Austin Convention Center. "They don't necessarily train you on the importance of diversity and inclusion, but in my perspective, you have to get the job done and if you don't, bad things happen. The military sets it up to where you lose your identity for a while—you're a soldier or an airman; you're part of something bigger than yourself."

Once the shared mission is established, Fernandez

says, the inclusion of different perspectives becomes critical to success, and a leader who fails to consider the opinions and ideas of others risks failure.

"If the others are different from me, I'm going to get better results," he says. "I'm not doing my job well if I'm not including a wide range of perspectives in the process. Know that I'm going to ask you, and know that I want you to come completely prepared to contribute."

Fernandez brings other perspectives to his understanding of public service leadership: his Mexican American identity, his status as a first-generation college student and military member, the father of three girls who is committed to seeing women achieve equality. As a member of Gen X, Fernandez has a different perspective on leadership than what was considered traditional in earlier generations.

"You can feel like there's always something to prove, but that's not always the case, and it can be empowering to step back and recognize that supporting my team doesn't mean I have to be out in front all the time," he says. "The biggest challenge is often our experience, and the things we've been through can make it hard to step back."

But if Fernandez spends his days encouraging a diversity of perspectives, he also knows the value of finding people who have been through what he's been through—and he turns to LGHN for that. He relishes the opportunity to encounter people older than him who have experience to share, people his own age to share challenges with, and younger generations he can mentor just as he was mentored.

"It's good to have people with a different outlook in your life,

and it's also important to have people who have gone through the same journey as you," he says. "You have to have both on your bench."

Joe Camacho



As race equity coordinator for Adams County, Colorado, Joe Camacho understands that each generation reacts differently to issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion—both within local government and the communities they serve.

In his position, Camacho is developing, coordinating, and implementing programs in Adams County that address the racial and ethnic disparities exacerbated by the pandemic. His approach centers on community engagement and actively incorporating the perspectives of those most affected by these disparities.

Camacho, a millennial, finds that younger workers tend to understand the need for and the benefits of his work immediately, while some other employees require what he calls "a little additional onboarding" about the importance of boosting equity and opportunity across the county.

"There are people who are well intentioned but have questions like, 'why are we focusing on race?' But this topic that's sometimes seen as touchy or taboo, we are calling it out as loudly as we can," Camacho says.

"When we use a race equity lens to look at outcomes, we want to be able to break down barriers for all minoritized

groups and identities, because what is a barrier for one identity is often a barrier for other identities."

Though Camacho is new to local government, he came to the county from education, drawn by the opportunity to move into diversity, equity, and inclusion work. And while his efforts are directed externally at improving the outcomes of county residents, he understands the value of efforts internal to local government, such as LGHN, and how they carry outward to the communities that employees serve.

"When we have organizations like LGHN, NFBPA [the National Forum for Black Public Administrators], and I-NAPA [the International Network of Asian Public Administrators], they aim to increase representation and enhance employee engagement," Camacho says. "Those of us in local government want support, community, and a sense of belonging. When we have organizations like LGHN, they give us space to connect with others like us who face similar struggles, and we learn to navigate difficult situations and uncomfortable conversations."

Magda Gonzalez



As a 15-year-old growing up in Redwood City, California, Magda Gonzalez was placed in a summer program at a neighborhood community center to learn more about the organization and how it was run. After the summer was over,

she continued working in the city government, working after school in parks and recreation, human resources, and finance.

After college and law school, Gonzalez returned to the community center—this time to manage the entire operation—before working her way up to the position of Redwood City's deputy city manager, and later as city manager in two nearby communities. The lesson, she says, is about knowing what a little encouraging nudge can mean to someone who might not be expecting it.

"Someone took an interest in me as this little brown girl and it made all the difference in the world," says Gonzalez, who was required in high school to keep her grades up as a condition of her work for the city. "For them it wasn't a big deal, but for me, it changed my life."

Gonzalez, now a public sector advisory consultant with Baker Tilly and a past president of LGHN, is part of the Baby Boom generation that's beginning to retire from local government after occupying positions of leadership over the past few decades. Gonzalez served as city manager for the California cities of East Palo Alto and Half Moon Bay, starting at a time when women were even less represented in the top jobs than they are today.

While Gonzalez worked for leaders who valued diversity in a county that always had a lot of female leaders, Gonzalez remembers going to conferences and meetings and understanding how different her perspective was as a Latina in a sector where many leadership positions were held by older white men.

Once she became a city manager herself, Gonzalez prioritized work that broadened community impact and gave

access to populations that had been traditionally marginalized. Her efforts included providing simultaneous translation of meetings and starting citizen academies to build civic engagement—running one academy in Spanish and another in English to increase representative participation.

"We as local government have to meet people where they are," she says. "The traditional outreach methods don't work for everybody, and they may not work for anybody. If the goal is to get more voices involved; what does that look like versus checking boxes and saying, well, we had two meetings."

To Gonzalez, making communities welcoming and diverse requires them to truly reflect their residents. She points to the way that police and fire jobs often attract generations of the same family because people see from a young age what the benefits and responsibilities of the job are. She'd like to ensure that women and people of color are afforded these opportunities, just as teenage Magda was years ago.

"You can't be what you don't see," she says. "Our local governments don't reflect our communities, so how do we change that, especially at the top? Having people with different perspectives and being cognizant of how that improves a community really makes a difference." **PM**

ENDNOTE

¹<https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/workforce-trends-watch-2023>

SAMANTHA TAVARES

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Creating Line of Sight for Employees

Aligning vision, goals, and performance

BY EMILY LEWIS

In today's dynamic and competitive environment, organizations must ensure that every employee understands how their individual contributions align with the vision and strategic plan. This concept, known as "line of sight," is critical for fostering a sense of purpose, motivation, and engagement among employees.

When employees can clearly see how their work directly connects to the overall goals of the organization, they are more likely to be committed, focused, and productive. As deputies and assistants, we often have the responsibility of helping our administrator bring

the board's strategic plan to life for employees. A key component to that success is creating alignment between the organizational goals and operational plans.

Line of sight refers to the direct connection between an employee's daily tasks, responsibilities, and performance with the broader objectives of the organization. When employees have a clear line of sight, they can answer the fundamental question: "How does what I do every day contribute to the success of the organization?"

Without a strong line of sight, employees may feel disconnected from the organization's purpose, leading to decreased motivation, job satisfaction, and overall performance. On the other hand, a well-established line of sight cultivates a sense of ownership and accountability, as employees recognize the direct impact of their efforts on the organization's success.

Knowing how their work contributes to a greater cause gives employees a sense of purpose and meaning in their roles. This sense of purpose leads to higher job satisfaction, improved overall well-being, and increased engagement. Employees who understand the significance of their contributions are more likely to be motivated and engaged in their work. They see the direct connection between their efforts and the achievement of organizational goals. This leads to increased retention of employees.

A strong line of sight also ensures that individual goals are aligned with team and organizational objectives. This alignment streamlines efforts and prevents conflicting priorities. When employees are aware of the impact of their performance on the organization, they are more likely to take ownership of their work and strive for

continuous improvement. In addition, line of sight fosters a collaborative environment, as employees understand how their work interacts with and supports the work of their colleagues. Ultimately, all of the above are necessary for moving the needle forward in advancing strategic initiatives for the organization.

Strategies for Creating Line of Sight

- 1. Clearly communicate the vision and goals.** Start by clearly articulating the organization's vision, mission, and strategic goals. Ensure that this information is readily accessible to all employees through regular communications, staff meetings, and internal platforms. In our organization, we have this information posted in multiple places, but it is more than just signage. You must breathe life into it and make it a part of your everyday verbiage. Creating a culture that is aligned with the mission, vision, and values is key and must be reinforced daily.
- 2. Connect individual roles to organizational goals.** Engage in regular discussions with employees to help them understand how their roles directly support the achievement of departmental and organizational objectives. Create tools and highlight success stories that demonstrate the impact of their efforts. In my



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organization, we created line of sight boards that are deployed in our departments to serve as forums for employees to share how their individual contributions align with our strategic focus areas.

- 3. Provide performance feedback.** Regularly provide feedback on individual performance, linking it to the attainment of goals and how it aligns with the organization's vision. Constructive feedback helps employees understand what they are doing well and areas where they can improve.
- 4. Offer training and development opportunities.** Invest in training and development programs that enhance employees' skills and knowledge, enabling them to better contribute to the organization's success. Make sure the training aligns with both individual and organizational goals.
- 5. Recognize and celebrate achievements.** Acknowledge and celebrate achievements, both big and small, to reinforce the importance of employee contributions. Publicly recognize employees who exemplify line of sight in their work. This goes

beyond your typical employee of the month/quarter/year type of program. Actively look for opportunities to celebrate your employees living your organizational values. Our administration gives Exceptional Service Awards to employees who we see or hear about going above and beyond to serve our residents or their colleagues.

6. Foster a culture of open communication.

Encourage open dialogue between employees and management. Actively listen to employees' concerns, ideas, and suggestions, as this reinforces a culture of transparency and involvement. Look for ways to communicate in multiple styles, not just email. As a deputy or assistant, you can play a key role in identifying these opportunities.

Creating line of sight for employees is not a one-time endeavor; it requires continuous effort and commitment and leadership. By clearly communicating the vision and goals, aligning individual roles with the broader objectives, and providing consistent feedback and recognition, organizations can empower employees to see their direct impact on the organization's success. This alignment not only enhances motivation and engagement but also contributes to a cohesive and high-performing workforce, ultimately propelling the organization toward sustained growth and success. **PM**

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The Art of Influence: Logic Leads the Way

BY GREG MCKENNA AND MEGAN DOAH

Applying logos in self-insurance and claims management

This is the second in a three-part series about the art of influence in public entities, using Aristotle's definition of the three ingredients necessary to influence others: ethos (trustworthiness), logos (logic), and pathos (empathy). In August's issue, the article focused on ethos and how public risk managers can maximize their authority to drive influence across the enterprise. This second article will discuss how risk managers can apply logos when making decisions on self-insurance and unbundling claims management.

Rising costs and less capacity have increased insurance spending during the past two years. Given that every dollar a public entity spends is from a finite budget, there is an added level of pressure on public risk managers.

But there are economic solutions that public risk managers can employ to reduce their total cost of risk. A critical element of any risk management program is ensuring quality claim handling and effectively managing costs.

As public risk managers are charged with making valid and sound decisions about their risk and insurance programs, it's important to apply Aristotle's second ingredient to influence others: logic.



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Logic, at its core, is the study of reasoning and arguments. It is a methodical way of analyzing and evaluating arguments to understand and distinguish between valid and invalid reasoning. Logic deals with concepts such as truth, validity, and soundness and is used to construct arguments and draw conclusions based on premises or assumptions. The goal of logic is to use a set of rules and principles to determine the logical coherence and consistency of arguments.

A deductive argument is a logical process in which a conclusion is formed from a collection of true premises. It is a type of argument designed to provide conclusive evidence for a particular claim or proposition by relying on logical connections between assumptions and the conclusion. In other words, a deductive argument begins with a general theory and then moves to a specific

Given that every dollar a public entity spends is from a finite budget, there is an added level of pressure on public risk managers.

application or example to demonstrate the validity of the theory. The purpose of a deductive argument is to prove a conclusion with a high degree of certainty based on logical reasoning and empirical evidence.

In making decisions about their risk and insurance programs, public risk managers are able to leverage the logic of unbundling their risk management program to a third-party claims administrator (TPA), which can prove to be challenging in the current economic climate.

However, pursuing self-insurance and unbundling claims management to a TPA will further support public risk managers in their unwavering pursuit of protecting the public trust. Three key premises help form an argument in favor of increased self-insurance.

1. Self-insurance empowers public risk managers to develop customized solutions that best suit their programs. Taking on more risk through self-insured retention offers public risk managers more control and the ability to truly own their risk management program. Transitioning public entities from traditional bundled arrangements with insurance carriers to self-insured programs each year requires an understanding of each critical component of the implementation process and training to all key stakeholders.

No two risk management programs are alike, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach. By converting to a self-insured program, public risk managers can tailor service instructions for their claims teams to follow while handling each claim the entity experiences. The

service instructions outline preferred points of contact, customized claims handling protocols, specialized claims reporting methods, and more.

2. Self-insurance grants public risk managers deeper insight into program performance. One of the keys to success in public entity programs is a strong partner to support their reporting needs and provide meaningful information—a partner who can help provide all the data inquiry and analytical tools required to successfully oversee and manage all aspects of a risk management program.

This could include standard reports, graphs, and dashboard templates that make it easy to create almost every type of tactical report for day-to-day plan administration, strategic reports to capture important trends, and forensic reports that open up the world of real cost drivers. Important for public risk managers to note is the ability to drill down reports into individual departments, locations, etc., to gain real insight into both holistic and partial program performance.

Also important is access to individual claim notes, transactions, financials, quality audit scores, and more to foster trust.

3. Self-insurance allows public risk managers the opportunity to establish long-term partnerships with their entrusted claims teams. When selecting a TPA, look for a partner that can work with you and your organization for an extended time and one that offers the flexibility to maintain its claims program despite carrier changes.

As public entities weather insurance market challenges, public risk managers must recognize the importance and logic behind keeping their claims teams consistent. The result is a steady, dependable claims team that understands the public entity, its program, and goals year after year. A reliable claims team serves as a compass for public entities and drives the delivery of superior outcomes and results. **PM**



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