ICMA

COMMITTED TO THE CORE

ICMA's FY 2026 Annual Report to the Membership

ICMA FY 2026 Annual Report

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A Message from ICMA President Mike Land

Committed to the Core

A reflection on stewardship and the enduring strength of local government

Throughout this year, as I traveled across the country and connected with members, I witnessed leaders leaning into extraordinary challenges. I met managers responding to crises, rebuilding trust, navigating uncertainty, and serving their communities with courage and professionalism. One truth became unmistakably clear: ICMA members meet every moment with resilience, purpose, and an unwavering commitment to public service.

These experiences deepened my connection to the theme that shaped my presidency: Committed to the Core. To me, it reflects the values at the heart of our profession: integrity, selfless service, and a steadfast responsibility to the people who rely on us.

Being committed to the core means recognizing that leadership is measured not by the challenges we avoid, but by the character and resolve we bring to the moments that test us.

Over the past year, I also saw ICMA strengthen its role as a trusted source of support for local government leaders. When leadership felt relentless, ICMA offered respite: a place to pause, connect with peers, and draw strength from one another. Those moments reminded us that our profession is strongest when we are connected by purpose, supported by one another, and united in service.

ICMA also provided rejuvenation. Through thought leadership, professional development, and the exchange of ideas, members renewed their perspective, sharpened their leadership, and returned to their communities better equipped to create sustainable and equitable places where people can thrive.

Perhaps most importantly, ICMA remained a refuge. As political and societal pressures tested even the strongest leaders, our commitment to ethics never wavered. The principles that guide our profession do not bend with political winds. They provide a stable foundation for sound judgment, difficult decisions, and leadership worthy of the public's trust.

ICMA membership is more than belonging to a professional association. It is a commitment to carrying the torch forward by advancing local government leadership and strengthening the communities where democracy is lived every day.

As my presidency comes to a close, I want to thank you for a truly remarkable year. The people I met and the stories I heard left me inspired and optimistic about what our profession can achieve. Your passion and perseverance give me great confidence in the road ahead.

As we look to the future, we will remain committed to the core. May we never lose sight of our purpose, the responsibility we share, and the impact this work will have on generations to come.

With appreciation,

Mike Land, ICMA-CM
City Manager
Coppell, Texas

A Message From ICMA's Executive Director

Dear ICMA Members,

As I reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the local government professionals who serve their communities with dedication, integrity, and resilience each day. Across cities, counties, towns, villages, regions, and continents, you continue to navigate complex challenges while remaining steadfast in your commitment to creating and sustaining thriving communities.

This year was an important one for ICMA. While we continued to deliver the programs, services, professional development opportunities, advocacy, research, and peer connections that members rely upon, we also took a significant step toward shaping the future of the organization itself.

Over the past year, ICMA's Executive Board and Leadership Team engaged in an extensive process to develop a new Strategic Roadmap to guide the organization in the years ahead. The new roadmap builds upon the foundation established through our previous strategic plan, Envision ICMA, while recognizing that both the profession and our association have evolved. It reflects what we heard from members, state associations, committees, volunteer leaders, and staff about the opportunities and challenges facing our profession and the role ICMA must play in supporting it.

At its core, the Strategic Roadmap is rooted in the simple belief that our members matter. The work we do, the services we provide, the connections we create, and the resources we develop should all strengthen professional local government and support the practitioners who lead our communities. The roadmap establishes a clear framework for ICMA's future through three focus areas that will guide our priorities, investments, and actions. Together, these focus areas provide direction for how we will serve members, strengthen the profession, and ensure that ICMA remains a trusted partner to local government professionals for years to come.

The annual report is organized around the three focus areas in the roadmap. Throughout these pages, you will see how ICMA's programs, initiatives, and accomplishments align with the priorities identified through the roadmap process and how they contribute to the broader vision we have established for the future of the organization.

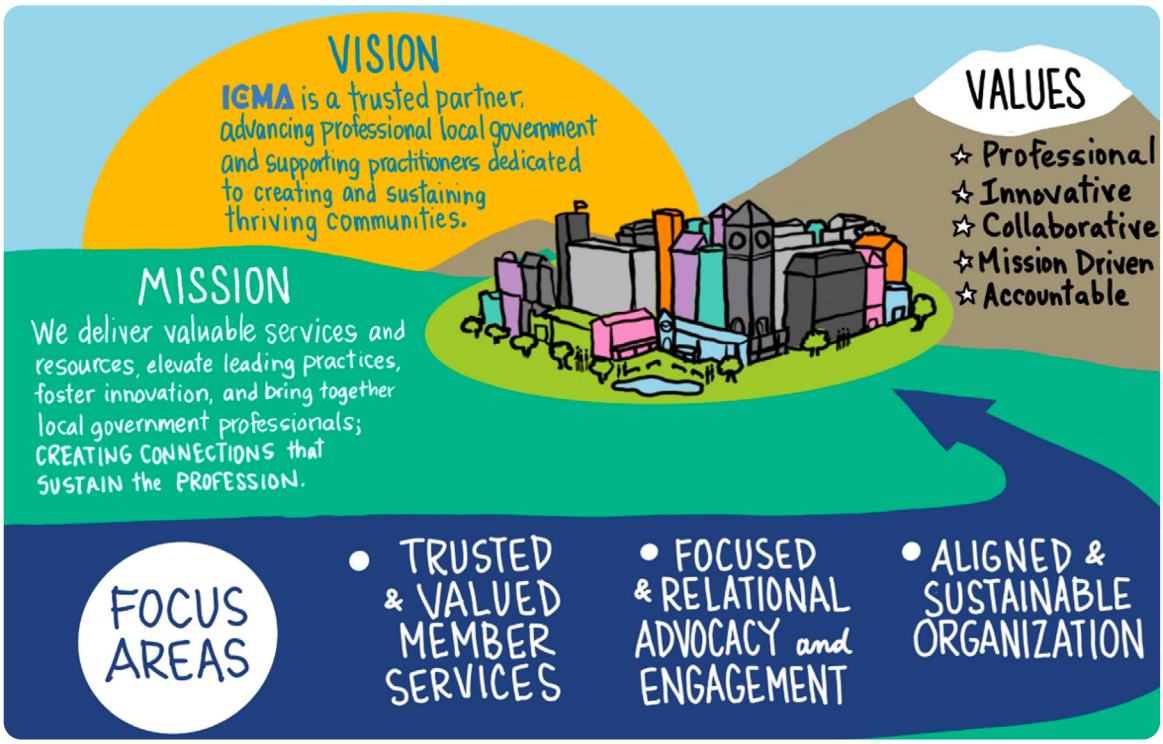
The development of a roadmap is only the beginning. What ultimately matters is how we execute it! As we move forward, we are committed to translating these priorities into action, measuring our progress, and ensuring that our work remains responsive to the evolving needs of our members and the communities they serve.

Thank you for your continued trust in ICMA and for the extraordinary work you do every day. Together, we will continue creating the connections that sustain the profession and advance professional local government around the world.

Sincerely,

Julia D. Novak, ICMA-CM
CEO/Executive Director

ICMA's New Strategic Roadmap



Focus Areas:

Trusted and Valued Member Services

Our members turn to ICMA for connection, credibility, leading practices, programmatic resources (training, research, innovation, learning, and development), recognition, and leadership opportunities.

Focused and Relational Advocacy and Engagement

ICMA works to advance professional local government and connects communities of interest globally to further shared interests.

Aligned and Sustainable Organization

ICMA is fiscally responsible and nurtures an entrepreneurial mindset that creates an agile and resilient organizational culture that produces value for members and partners.

Overview of Accomplishments

Trusted and Valued Member Services

Our members turn to ICMA for connection, credibility, leading practices, programmatic resources (training, research, innovation, learning, and development), recognition, and leadership opportunities.

#MembersMatter: By the Numbers

ICMA's ability to advance professional local government depends on a strong and engaged membership. During FY 2026, the association continued to attract new members, retain existing members, and expand opportunities for engagement and leadership. The following statistics illustrate key membership trends and characteristics from the past year.

Membership Momentum: *FY 2025 to FY 2026*

Total Members	**13,469 → 13,908**	↑ +439 (+3.3%)
New Full Members	**442 → 472**	↑ +30 (+6.8%)
New Affiliate Members	**838 → 1,058**	↑ +220 (+26.3%)
Full Member Retention	**90.3% → 91.3%**	↑ +1.0 percentage point
Affiliate Member Retention	**73.2% → 70.4%**	↓ -2.8 percentage points

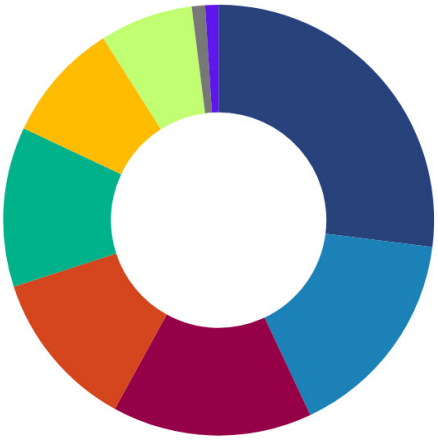
FY 2025 baseline / FY 2026 result

ICMA Membership at a Glance

Membership by Jurisdiction Size

- 11% Under 5,000
- 11% 5,000–9,999
- 18% 10,000–24,999
- 17% 25,000–49,999
- 15% 50,000–99,999
- 13% 100,000–249,999
- 12% 250,000+
- 3% Unknown

Membership by Position



- 27% CAO
- 16% Retired or Life
- 15% Department Director
- 12% ACAO
- 12% Entry to Mid-Level Management
- 9% Students
- 7% Others Not in Service
- 1% Professors
- 1% Interns or Fellows

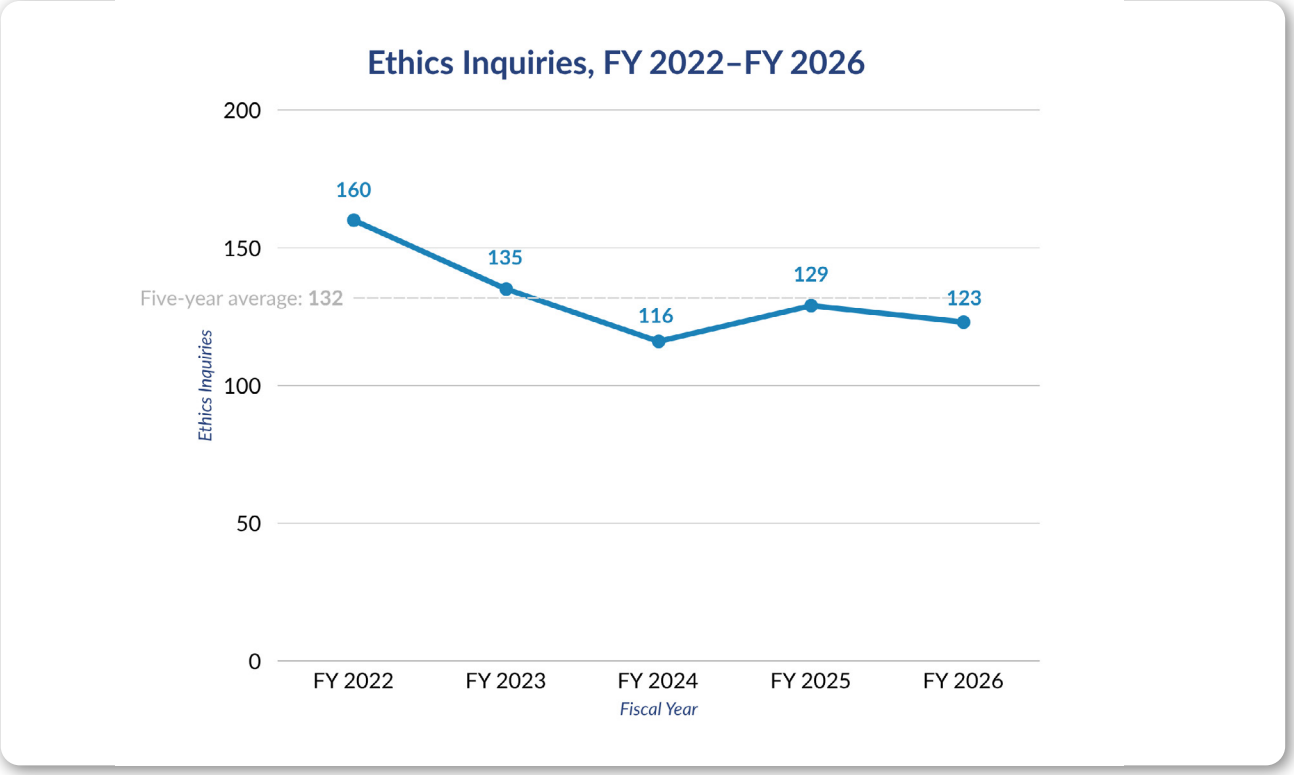
Membership by Gender

- 61% Male
- 39% Female

Promoting Ethical Leadership in Local Government

Ethics remains central to ICMA's identity and to the trust members build in the communities they serve. In FY 2026, ICMA's ethics program continued to **support members through education, confidential guidance, practical resources, and peer-reviewed accountability.** Ethics staff facilitated state association briefings and educational sessions that reached more than 1,900 individuals and served as subject matter experts for ICMA programs and resources. The program also produced ethics-focused content for members, including the monthly *Ethics Matter!* column in *PM* magazine, blog posts, and customized conference sessions.

ICMA also continued to **provide members with confidential ethics advice and guidance.** Through ICMA's ethics program, members have access to confidential guidance, educational materials, frequently asked questions, and information about the Code of Ethics that help them uphold the profession's commitment to integrity, accountability, and public trust. Each inquiry varies in complexity and staff may spend anywhere from 30 minutes to 5 or more hours depending on the situation.



FY 2026 also marked the **completion of a significant update to the Rules of Procedure for Enforcement of the Code of Ethics**, which govern the process used when ICMA receives a complaint alleging that a member has violated the Code.

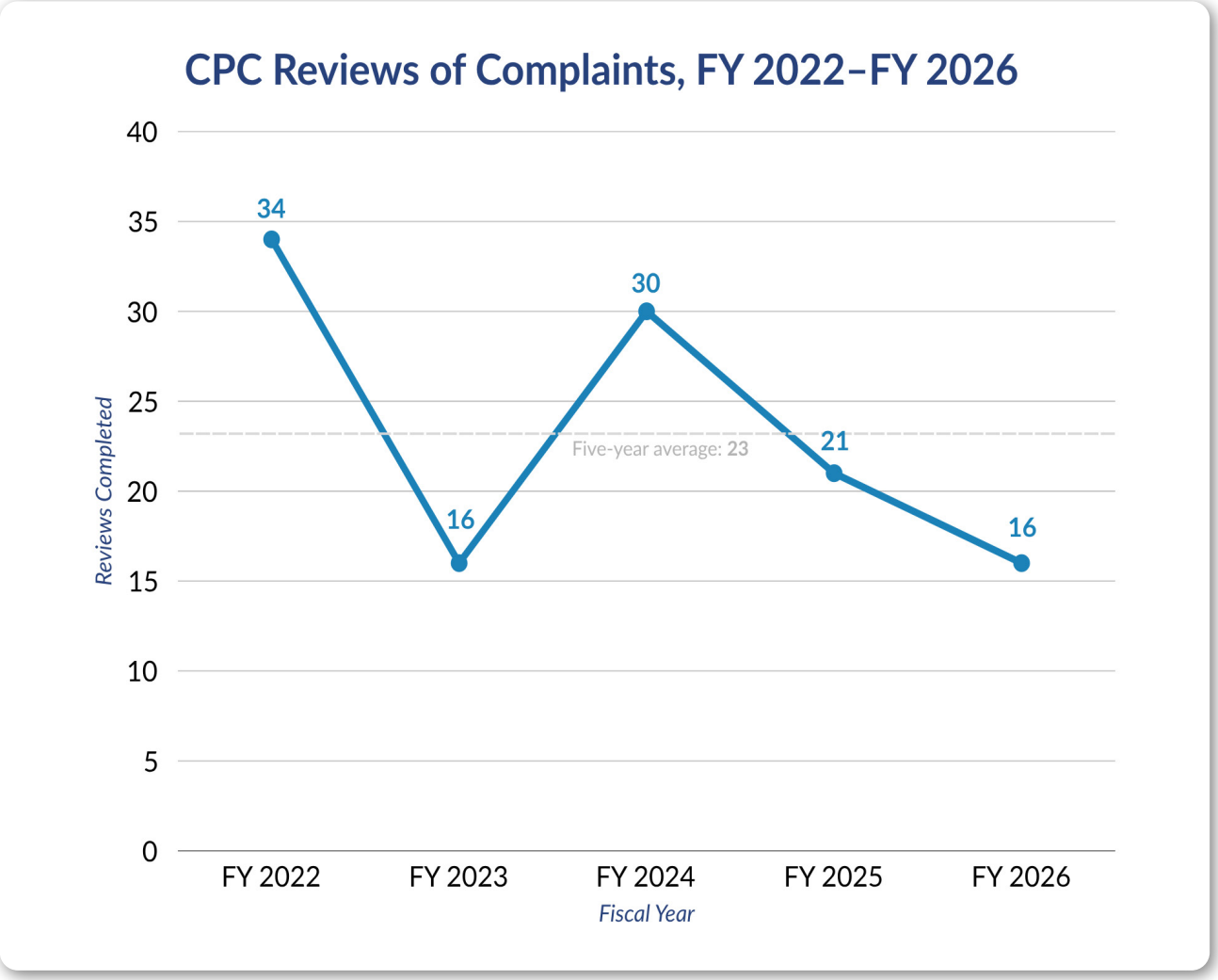
Guided by the ICMA's Executive Board's Committee on Professional Conduct (CPC), the revisions were informed by comparative research, analysis of ethics review outcomes, and opportunities for member feedback. The committee's work reflected a commitment to maintaining public confidence in the profession while recognizing the challenging environment in which many local government professionals serve.

The CPC found that complaints filed by individuals outside the profession overwhelmingly resulted in findings that no ethics violation had occurred. These findings reinforced the importance of ensuring that ICMA's ethics review process remains focused on conduct that undermines the profession's integrity and damages public trust while also protecting members from unsupported or retaliatory complaints. The updated Rules clarify who may file an ethics complaint, preserve avenues for legitimate whistleblower complaints from individuals with first-hand knowledge of alleged conduct, strengthen protections against harassment and retaliation, establish a five-year review period for conduct unless concealment occurred, and ensure members retain reconsideration and appeal rights regardless of their membership status during a review. The revisions also strengthen confidentiality protections designed to safeguard participants throughout the process.

For more information on revisions to the Rules, scan QR code or visit: https://icma.org/articles/pm-magazine/ethics-mattertm-who-eligible-file-ethics-complaint-icma-and-why-matters

Upholding the Code

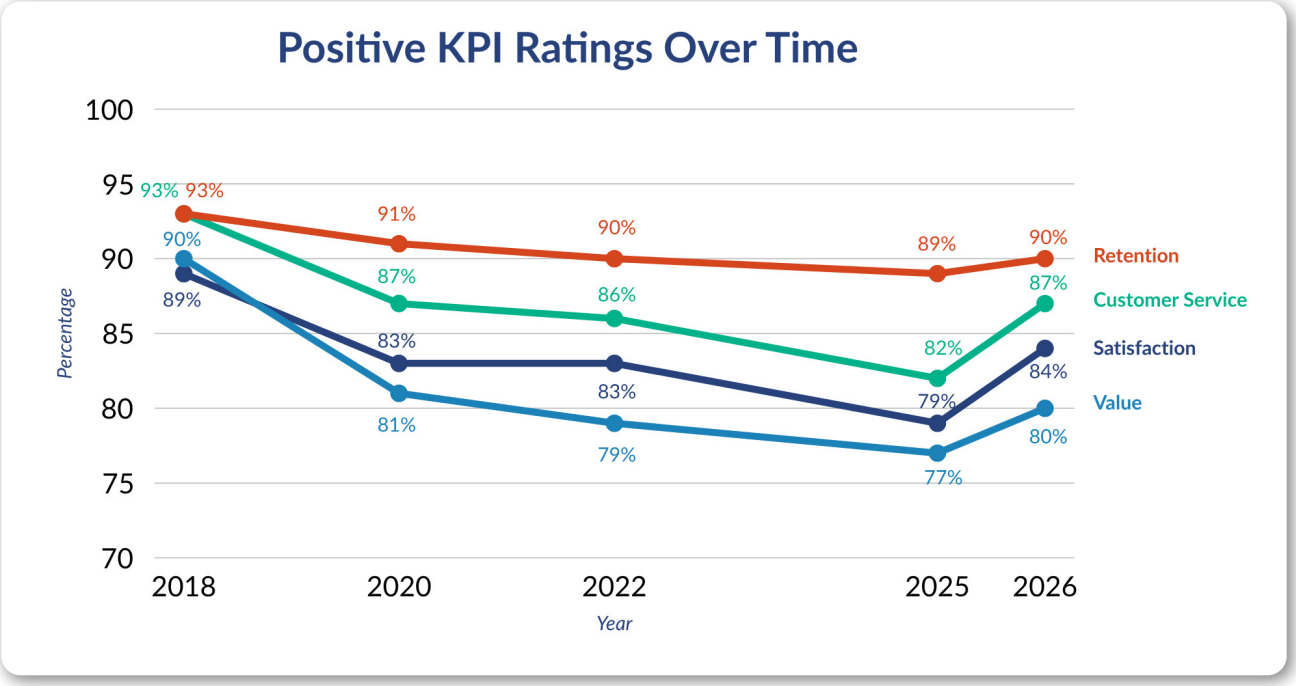
ICMA enforces the Code of Ethics through a peer-review process administered by the Executive Board's Committee on Professional Conduct (CPC). In FY 2026, **the CPC completed 16 reviews of complaints filed against ICMA members**. Ten reviews were closed after determining that the member's conduct did not violate the Code, while six resulted in sanctions for conduct that violated the Code. Those sanctions included one public censure with a permanent membership bar and five private censures. In the past five years, the CPC has reviewed an average of 23 ethics complaints each year.

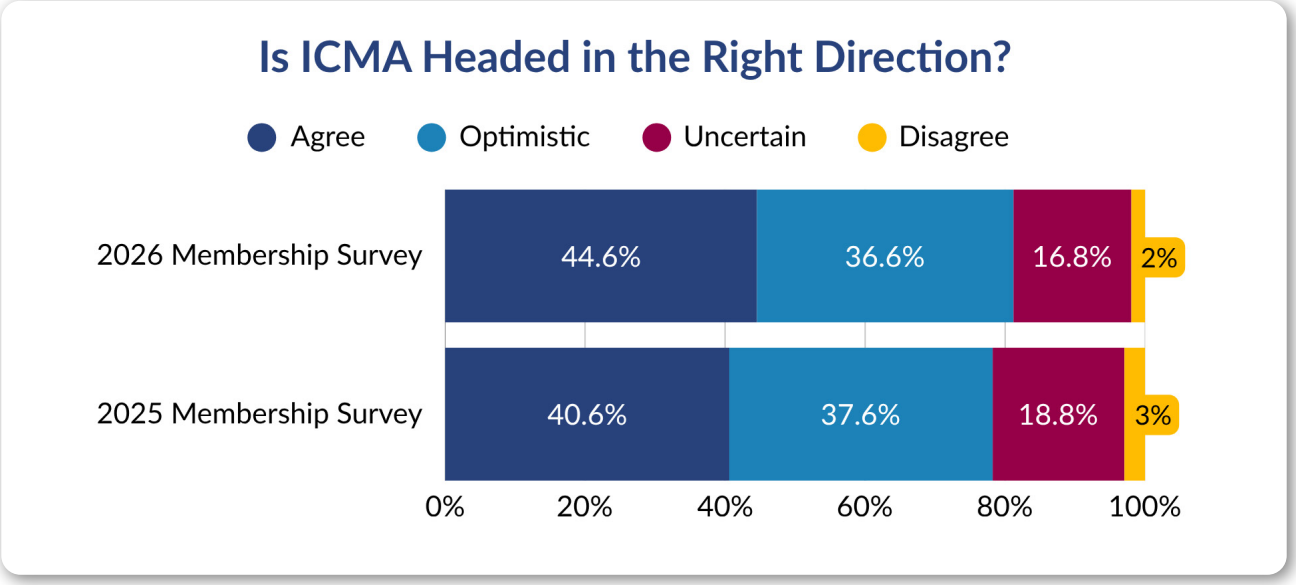


Building an Understanding of Our Members' Needs

ICMA is conducting annual membership satisfaction surveys that provide valuable feedback on the association's performance, programs, products, and services. The results reflected strong member satisfaction with the value of membership, quality of customer service, and likelihood of renewing and recommending ICMA membership. Building an Understanding of Our Members Needs are summarized in the following chart.

Members most frequently described ICMA as informative, supportive, and professional, and a majority expressed optimism about the association's direction. In addition to identifying areas of strength, member feedback highlighted opportunities for continued improvement and informed ICMA's efforts to enhance programs, services, and resources in support of local government professionals.





Advancing Research, Innovation, and Leading Practices in Local Government

ICMA continued to strengthen its role as a trusted source of research, innovation, and practical knowledge for local government professionals. In FY 2026, the Innovation and Research team brought together programs, partnerships, research initiatives, and learning opportunities that help practitioners navigate emerging challenges and identify effective solutions for their communities. Despite significant challenges associated with changes in federal funding priorities, ICMA adapted its approach while continuing to connect local governments with expertise, resources, and peer networks that advance professional practice.

Through its **Economic Mobility and Opportunity (EMO) initiatives**, funded by the Gates Foundation, ICMA supported member-led efforts to expand economic opportunity and improve quality of life in communities across the United States. Sixteen local governments received more than $5 million in funding through the EMO Special Assistants Program, while 15 communities participated in a peer learning and grant program focused on locally driven economic mobility strategies. ICMA also continued to support the next generation of practitioners and researchers by partnering with universities to explore community-based solutions to economic mobility challenges.

EMO program participants convened in El Paso County, Texas, in December 2025.

During FY 2026, the Gates Foundation converted two existing EMO grants to unrestricted gifts, resulting in a one-time increase in ICMA's net assets. ICMA will continue to use a portion of these funds to support the EMO Special Assistants Program through 2028. The remaining funds will establish an innovation fund to support new programs, products, and services that advance local government leadership, management, and service delivery in alignment with ICMA's Strategic Roadmap.

ICMA CEO and Executive Director Julia Novak delivers welcoming remarks on August 5, 2025, at Brownfields 2025 in Chicago, Illinois.

ICMA's technical assistance and partnership programs continued to deliver expertise on critical issues facing local governments. Through long-standing partnerships focused on brownfields redevelopment, renewable energy, and economic recovery, ICMA provided training, resources, and direct support to communities working to strengthen local economies and improve quality of life.

More than 2,700 participants attended the **National Brownfields Training Conference**, while ICMA's **Energy Ready** suite of programs were restarted after being paused for much of FY 2026 due to changes in federal funding priorities. In FY 2027, technical assistance activities to help communities advance renewable energy and electric vehicle infrastructure initiatives will restart.

ICMA also continued collaboration with the National League of Cities and National Association of Counties to provide capacity building support for 65 **Economic Recovery Corps (ERC)** fellows and their host communities across the country to promote local economic resilience and recovery. (The ERC is a program led by the International Economic Development Administration and funded by the U.S. Economic Development Administration.)

ICMA staff Emily Sparks and Gabe Daugherty celebrated as economic superheroes by IEDC for their work on Economic Recovery Corps.

New Hampshire communities celebrate their work to achieve SolSmart designation by adopting solar-friendly policies and practices.

Research, publications, and knowledge sharing also remained central to ICMA's mission. During FY 2026, ICMA conducted and published research on issues ranging from family caregiving and healthy communities to the future of professional local government management.

- With support from the National Academy for State Health Policy and The John A. Hartford Foundation, ICMA conducted a national survey of local governments on priorities and actions related to family caregiving. Results suggest opportunities for local governments to leverage their unique capacity as an employer, a key community voice, and in policymaking and budgeting to help connect family caregivers with available resources.
- The organization launched a partnership with the University of North Carolina School of Government to develop a new national database on local government characteristics and funded research exploring the structural foundations of ethical and professional local government leadership.
- ICMA funded 16 small grants to local government researchers to explore the question, *if we conceived of professional local government today, what structural elements would we put in place to support ethical leadership and professionalism in local government?*
- More than 500 participants attended ICMA's 2026 Local Government Reimagined Conferences on priority topics identified by members: The AI Edge (held in Orlando, Florida) and *Democracy and the Public Trust* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).
- ICMA released a new book, *Research Methods for Public Administration: From Data to Better Decision Making, 3rd Edition.*
- ICMA's online bookstore (bookstore.icma.org) was enhanced, adding additional resources for members and centralizing a one stop shop for all ICMA-developed longer-form content, increasing ease of accessibility of information to local government professionals.

500+	2,700	$5M+
Local Government Reimagined conference attendees	Brownfields Conference participants	awarded to 16 EMO Communities

Developing the Next Generation of Local Government Leaders

ICMA continued to invest in the future of the profession by creating pathways for students and emerging professionals to explore, enter, and advance in local government service. Through student chapters, fellowships, and internship opportunities, ICMA helped connect future leaders with mentors, professional networks, and hands-on experiences that prepare them for careers in public service.

Student Chapters remained a critical entry point for students interested in local government careers. During FY 2026, ICMA established seven new student chapters and reactivated six previously inactive chapters, bringing the total number of active chapters to 82. Engagement across the network continued to grow, with 41 chapters submitting annual reports, up from 29 the previous year, and average chapter membership increasing from 10 to 16 students. To further support student members, ICMA launched the Leading into the Future webinar series, connecting students with practitioners and thought leaders on career development, leadership, resilience, and public service.

The **Local Government Management Fellowship (LGMF)** program continued to provide early-career professionals with hands-on experience in local government leadership. The 2025–2026 cohort included 28 fellows serving in 21 communities across the United States, where participants gained practical experience while receiving mentorship, professional development, and networking opportunities. As the fellowship year concluded, several fellows transitioned directly into local government positions, while others continued their professional development through a second fellowship year. Building on that success, ICMA expanded the 2026-2027 cohort to 41 fellows placed in 27 communities.

The **Bob Turner Scholars Internship Program** also continued growing in FY 2026, expanding from five to eight host communities and from 11 to 14 interns. The program provided students with meaningful exposure to local government service through hands-on work experience, cohort learning, mentorship, and a capstone public service project. Support for the program continued to grow as well, with the Bob Turner Scholars Fund increasing to more than $909,000, helping ensure opportunities for future generations of public servants.

Delivering Learning Opportunities at Every Career Stage

ICMA expanded professional development opportunities in FY 2026, helping local government professionals build skills, strengthen leadership capacity, and stay connected to the profession at every stage of their careers. Through **ICMA University**, members and other local government professionals accessed training in the formats that best fit their needs, including webinars, online learning, leadership institutes, annual conference learning opportunities, and targeted in-person programs.

In FY 2026, 5,000 people engaged with ICMA University's online learning platform for webinars and online learning. The reimagined **Emerging Leaders Development Program** launched with a cohort of 102 participants, and single webinars became free to members, with first-year registrations of 10,081.

ICMA also deepened connections through in-person leadership development. **Annual Conference Micro-Certificates** served 486 registrants, while the **Gettysburg Leadership Institute** hosted 49 participants and the **Williamsburg Leadership Institute** hosted 34. The redesigned **Leadership ICMA** graduated its first class and welcomed a new cohort in April, continuing ICMA's commitment to developing leaders prepared to serve their communities and the profession.

When communities faced urgent challenges, ICMA responded with timely learning and support. Following the crisis in Minnesota, ICMA deployed its new **Civic Learning Lab** and traveled to St. Paul to provide in-person training for local government professionals on crisis communication and conflict de-escalation, including crisis communication training with Julie Parker Communications.

Modernizing Credentialing for Today's Local Government Leaders

FY 2026 also marked an important milestone for the ICMA-CM program. As the Voluntary Credentialing Program celebrated its 25th year, ICMA announced two Credentialed Manager Summits—one in Durham, North Carolina, on August 6 and one in Palo Alto, California, on August 27—and advanced significant changes to streamline the program and simplify the credentialing process.

At its June 2026 meeting, the ICMA Executive Board adopted updates that will take effect in early 2027. These include a new Credentialed Manager Fellow designation for new CAOs and ACAOs, a revised executive experience threshold of three years with an MPA or MPP degree to receive the full credential, and a new Legacy Leader designation for senior and retired Credentialed Managers who want to give back to the profession. With the revised experience threshold, current Credentialed Manager candidates will become fully credentialed.

The approved changes also eliminate the procedural step of ICMA Executive Board approval for credentials, transition the program from quarterly review to rolling review and approval, and retain the 360 Review as a one-time requirement for Credentialed Managers while broadening the types of reviews that may be used. Together, these updates position the credentialing program to be more efficient, timely, and accessible while preserving its role in recognizing professional achievement and commitment to the field.

Elevating the Visibility and Impact of Professional Management Practitioners

ICMA continued to recognize excellence, celebrate professional achievement, and create meaningful opportunities for members to contribute to the profession. FY 2026 saw a record number of nominations for the Local Government Excellence Awards, driven in part by the introduction of the Good Governance Award, which honors exemplary partnerships between governing bodies and professional managers. The executive board also awarded ICMA's highest honor, the Distinguished Service Award, to retired members AC Gonzalez, Geralyn Barone, and David Limardi for their outstanding contributions to the profession.

Additional investments in member development and support included the William Ferguson Jr., Scholarship, complimentary annual conference registrations and travel assistance for Managers in Transition, ongoing engagement of ICMA's 119 senior advisors, and a strong response to the 2026 Call for Volunteers, with more than 200 members seeking opportunities to serve on ICMA committees. Together, these efforts strengthened professional connections, recognized leadership excellence, and expanded opportunities for members to shape the future of the profession.

Focused and Relational Advocacy and Engagement

ICMA works to advance professional local government and connects communities of interest globally to further shared interests.

The Fund at 40: Supporting the Future of Professional Management

For 40 years, the ICMA **Future of Professional Management Fund** has supported one of ICMA's core priorities: advancing professional local government management and promoting the council-manager form of government. Through the generosity of members, state associations, and other supporters, the Fund provides resources that help communities understand the benefits of professional management, strengthen local leadership, and support efforts to adopt or retain council-manager government.

In FY 2026, the Fund helped local leaders advocate for professional management in communities across the country. ICMA provided staff support to leaders pursuing adoption of council-manager government in **Blythewood, South Carolina**; and helped community advocates in **Germantown, Tennessee**, successfully educate voters about the value of retaining their community's professional administrator form of government. In addition, ICMA continued to provide presentations, technical assistance, and educational resources to communities exploring governance options and seeking information about the council-manager plan.

To expand public understanding of professional local government management, ICMA released new videos highlighting communities that have adopted or retained the council-manager form of government and developed additional short-form resources highlighting "**Why the Council-Manager Form Works**" focused on financial management and the respective roles of elected officials and professional managers. These resources complement ICMA's broader collection of council-manager government materials, including brochures, articles, podcasts, videos, and research that help communities make informed governance decisions.

FY 2026 was also a milestone year for the Fund. Thanks to the generosity of ICMA members, friends, and state associations, the Fund surpassed its goal of raising $100,000 in donations by December 2025, helping ensure continued support for the next generation of local government leaders and the advancement of professional management for years to come.

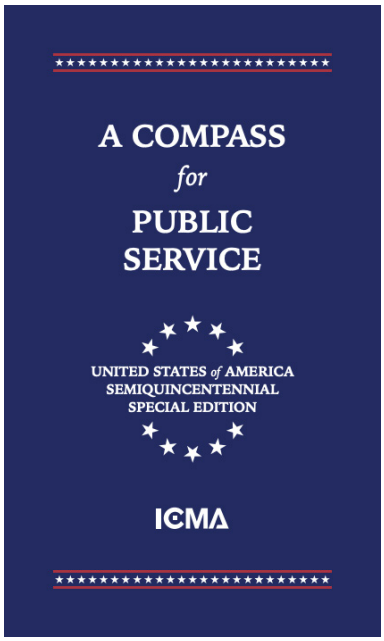
Cultivating Relationships with Mission-Aligned Organizations

Convening Local Government Leaders Around Thriving Communities

In June 2026, ICMA partnered with the Government Finance Officers Association (GFOA) to convene representatives from local government professional associations and affinity

groups from across the public sector in Washington, D.C., for **The Convening of Local Government Professional Associations** to explore what makes communities thrive and identify opportunities for greater collaboration across the profession. Participants examined common priorities reflected in local government strategic plans and discussed the challenges facing practitioners today, including workforce development, financial constraints, technological change, declining trust and civility, and the need for adaptive leadership.

Attendees discuss leading practices for thriving communities during The Convening of Local Government Professional Associations hosted by ICMA and GFOA on June 24, 2026.



ICMA's CEO/Executive Director, Julia D. Novak noted in her forward, "ICMA has put in one place the words that collectively form the "why" of professional local government managers. They are historic, they are timeless, and they are evolving. . . . This keepsake includes many documents, but they are not different. They are expressions of the same promise across time."

The convening revealed significant alignment across professions and disciplines, resulting in a shared commitment to continue collaborating on issues of common concern. ICMA is continuing these conversations through follow-up working groups and collaborative initiatives where energy and interest align—including important topics like promoting civility and trust in public institutions, enhancing leadership development across local government professions, and sharing technology and AI resources.

Local Gov250

In recognition of America's 250th anniversary, ICMA helped lead several initiatives that highlighted the essential role of local government in sustaining democracy. Through the Local Government 250 initiative,

ICMA partnered with organizations across the profession to recognize 250 "Champions of Democracy," celebrate public service, and elevate public understanding of local government's role in civic life. An onsite celebration of the champions was hosted in Philadelphia prior to the Local Government Reimagined Conference in May. Additional programming, publications, and *PM* magazine content reinforced the importance of professional local government leadership and the enduring principles that guide public service.

To honor the Semisesquicentennial, ICMA released *A Compass for Public Service*, a keepsake booklet that celebrates America 250 and professional local government by featuring founding and seminal documents, speeches, and guideposts.

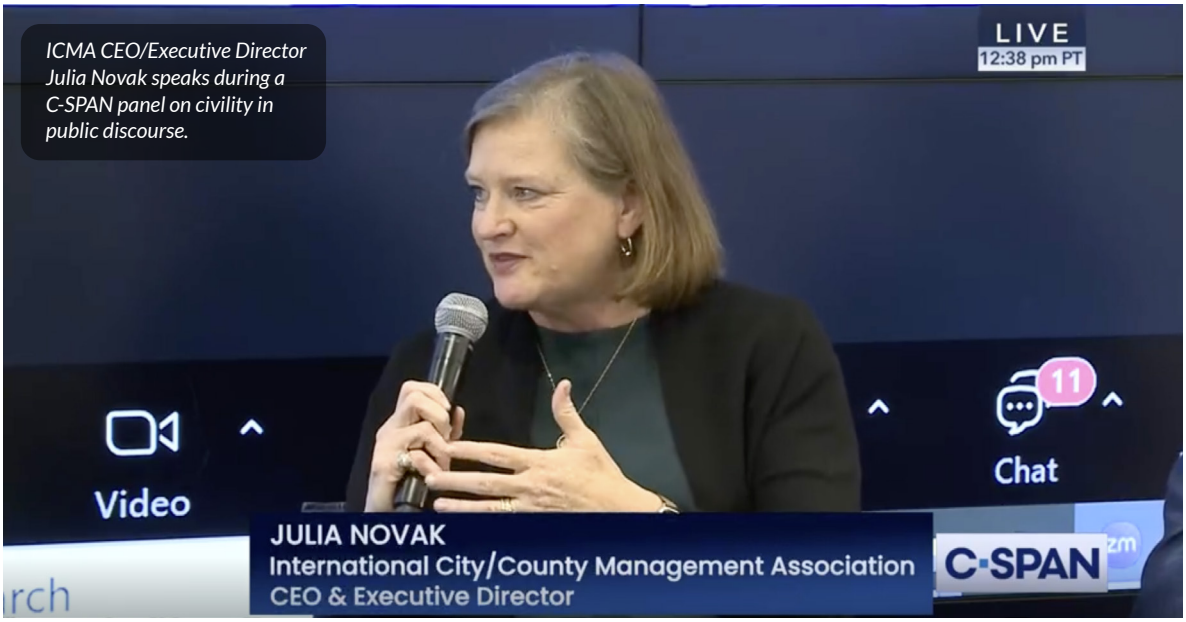
Exploring Shared Priorities Through the Big 7

In April 2026, leaders of the "Big 7" national organizations convened to discuss shared challenges, the evolving role of professional associations in public policy discussions, and opportunities to strengthen dialogue on issues affecting local communities. The Big 7 is a coalition of seven nonpartisan, nonprofit organizations that collectively represent state and local government elected and appointed officials composed of ICMA, the National Governors Association, National League of Cities, U.S. Conference of Mayors, Council of State Governments, National Association of Counties, and National Conference of State Legislatures. The conversations underscored a common interest in supporting effective federal-state-local relationships while recognizing the different ways organizations advocate on behalf of their members.

As part of that ongoing engagement, these leaders agreed to continue discussions focused on the principles of federalism and their importance to effective local governance. These conversations provide an opportunity to explore areas of shared interest, strengthen relationships across organizations, and identify constructive ways to elevate issues important to communities across the country.

Promoting Civility and Public Trust in Local Government

In FY 2026, ICMA partnered with national organizations and local government leaders to elevate conversations about civility, public trust, and the health of democratic institutions. Through articles, conference programming, and public engagement efforts, ICMA explored the challenges posed by increasing polarization, declining trust in institutions, and the erosion of civil discourse, while highlighting the unique role local government professionals play in fostering constructive dialogue, ethical leadership, and community trust.



ICMA CEO/Executive Director Julia Novak speaks during a C-SPAN panel on civility in public discourse.

As part of these efforts, ICMA CEO/Executive Director Julia D. Novak collaborated with peer organizations to bring these conversations to broader audiences. She participated in a national C-SPAN panel on civility in public discourse and joined the National League of Cities' CitiesSpeak podcast to discuss the future of local government, democracy, and public trust. These engagements reinforced a shared commitment among local government organizations to advancing respectful civic engagement, strengthening confidence in public institutions, and supporting local leaders as they navigate increasingly complex governance environments. Civility was a central theme for the Local Government Reimagined Conference in Philadelphia and is a focus of ICMA's Civic Learning Lab.

Advancing Global Partnerships in Local Government

ICMA continues to promote relationships with organizations around the world that are committed to professional local government management. Over the past year, ICMA signed several new strategic alliance agreements with the following organizations, bringing our total number of strategic alliances to 20:

- **Institute for Local Government Management (iLGM) in South Africa** is the professional association representing municipal managers and senior local government executives in South Africa.
- **Eswatini Local Authorities Managers Association (ELAMA)** is the professional body for local government managers and represents every established urban area —town boards, city and town councils and municipalities—in the Kingdom of Eswatini.
- **The Network of European Metropolitan Regions and Areas (METREX)** is a membership network of metropolitan regions, cities, planning authorities, and regional governments across Europe.

- **The Federation of Local Authorities of Israel (FLAI)** is an umbrella organization representing all local authorities in Israel.
- **National Association of General Directors of Local Entities (ANDIGEL)** is a professional association in Italy created to bring together public administrators who perform the functions of general director/city manager.
- **Slovakian City Managers Association (SCMA)** is Slovakia's professional association for municipal chief administrative officers, city managers, and heads of local government offices.

In maintaining these relationships, ICMA and the local government organizations seek to foster global exchange, expand organizational networks, and create opportunities for peer-to-peer or city-to-city exchanges.

International exchange and peer learning remained an important component of ICMA's work. Through the **Young Southeast Asia Leaders Initiative (YSEALI)**, ICMA welcomed 76 fellows from 11 countries who were placed with local governments and partner organizations throughout the United States. These exchanges fostered global learning, strengthened professional networks, and provided opportunities for practitioners from around the world to share ideas and approaches for addressing common local government challenges.

YSEALI Fellows Forum in Washington, D.C., May 2026.

As part of its commitment to advancing professional local government worldwide, ICMA held two Global Exchanges during FY 2026. Each Global Exchange program is designed to enable direct ICMA member engagement with local government counterparts from around the world to share experiences and solutions to shared local government challenges.

In September 2025, 23 ICMA members and 5 ICMA staff traveled to **Eswatini and South Africa** to in a Global Exchange hosted by the Municipal Council of Manzini,

the Eswatini Local Authorities Managers Association (ELAMA) and the South African Local Government Association (SALGA). The exchanges included site visits to local governments, idea exchanges and participation in the 2025 Eswatini Sustainable Urban Development Seminar, and the SALGA Local Government Talent Management Seminar. The exchange promoted meaningful interaction with local government leaders from all countries and highlighted such local government topics of shared interest as workforce development, infrastructure funding, and climate resilience.

ICMA Leadership accepts recognition from ELAMA and the Honorable Minister for Housing and Urban Development at the Eswatini Sustainable Erban Development seminar during the 2026 Global Exchange

In March 2026, a delegation of 26 ICMA members, 10 ICMA staff members, and the ICMA Executive Board traveled to **Ireland**. The delegation included members from Australia, Canada, Eswatini, Latvia, Northern Cyprus, and the United States. The County and City Management Association (CCMA) and the Local Government Management Agency (LGMA) hosted the Exchange. Participants interacted with municipal managers and other local government staff on such issues as environmental regeneration, brownfields redevelopment, economic transition, tourism, and smart cities to exchange best practices and lessons learned from challenges faced by municipalities.

ICMA delegation, representatives from CCMA, and County Longford gather in front of Saint Mel's Cathedral during the 2026 Global Exchange

Resources, Opportunities, and Knowledge

Connecting and Learning at ICMA's Annual Conference

ICMA's 2025 Annual Conference in Tampa, Florida, brought together 5,384 local government professionals, partners, and thought leaders for the profession's premier educational and networking event. The conference featured **229 educational sessions and learning opportunities**, providing participants with practical insights, innovative ideas, and peer-to-peer connections on the issues shaping the future of local government. A sold-out exhibit hall featuring **232 exhibitors** and strong support from conference sponsors further enhanced opportunities for attendees to explore solutions, share experiences, and build professional relationships. The event welcomed **3,290 ICMA members and 2,116 nonmembers**, demonstrating the conference's continued role as a leading forum for advancing professional local government management.

Regional Peer Support Calls

In FY 2026, ICMA launched monthly Regional Peer Support Calls to provide members with a confidential forum to connect with peers, discuss emerging challenges, and share practical leadership strategies. Facilitated by ICMA's Regional Directors with participation from executive board members, the calls were initially introduced as a pilot program and extended in response to strong participation and positive member feedback.

The conversations reinforced the value of creating trusted spaces where local government leaders can candidly exchange ideas with colleagues who understand the unique demands of the profession. While each region brought distinct perspectives, common themes included council-manager relations, increasing incivility and political polarization, workforce recruitment and retention, role clarity, and such rapidly evolving issues as growth management, data center development, and legislative changes affecting local government. Beyond providing timely peer support, the calls strengthened professional connections, surfaced emerging trends affecting communities across the country, and helped inform future ICMA programs and resources designed to support members in an increasingly complex environment.

A Day with ICMA

ICMA created additional opportunities for members to engage directly with association leadership and with one another through **A Day with ICMA**. Held in Phoenix, Arizona, and Issaquah, Washington, these interactive gatherings brought members together with Julia D. Novak, ICMA CEO/Executive Director, and Michelle Crandall, chief member services officer, for candid conversations about emerging trends, disruptive forces, and the evolving

challenges facing local government professionals. Across the two events, members participated in discussions that provided valuable insight into the issues shaping the profession while strengthening connections between members and ICMA leadership.

Participants hear from ICMA Leadership during "A Day with ICMA" March 4, 2026 in Phoenix, Arizona, hosted by the Central Arizona Project.

Supporting Women in Local Government Leadership

In FY 2026, ICMA expanded opportunities for women in local government to connect, learn, and grow through its **SheLeadsGov initiative**. Guided by the SheLeadsGov Member Committee and supported by a multichannel outreach campaign, the program delivered in-person conference programming, a virtual summit, peer learning huddles, leadership content, and online engagement opportunities. The initiative achieved record participation, including 1,304 registrations for the SheLeadsGov Virtual Summit with a 70.8% live attendance rate, 326 registrations across two new virtual huddles, more than 10 articles and blog posts focused on women in leadership, two LinkedIn Live events, and the launch of the Inside SheLeadsGov LinkedIn newsletter, which grew to more than 1,300 subscribers within its first two months, demonstrating strong demand for leadership development and professional connections among women in the profession.

Aligned and Sustainable Organization

ICMA is fiscally responsible and nurtures an entrepreneurial mindset that creates an agile and resilient organizational culture that produces value for members and partners.

660 North Capitol Street NW—ICMA's New Home

The entrance to ICMA's new office space, located at 660 North Capitol Street NW

777 to 660
North Capitol Street

- Nearly 40 years at 777 North Capitol Street before relocating.
- Approximately $500,000 in annual occupancy cost savings.
- Reduced overall office footprint from more than 40,000 square feet at 777 North Capitol to less than 15,000 square feet at 660 North Capitol, while enhancing workplace functionality and collaboration.
- Transitioned away from commercial real estate ownership to focus resources on mission-driven activities.

During FY 2026, ICMA completed one of the most significant operational projects in its recent history: the relocation of its headquarters to 660 North Capitol Street NW in Washington, D.C. After nearly four decades at 777 North Capitol Street, where ICMA shared ownership of its office building with two partner organizations, the move marked both the closing of an important chapter and the beginning of a new one. While the former headquarters served the association well for many years, the relocation created an opportunity to align ICMA's workplace with its evolving needs, culture, and strategic direction.

The transition to 660 North Capitol culminated a multi-year effort involving sale of ownership interest, lease negotiations, space planning, construction, technology infrastructure, furnishings, and move

coordination. The new headquarters were intentionally designed to support a flexible workplace environment while significantly reducing the organization's overall office footprint—from more than 40,000 square feet at 777 North Capitol to less than 15,000 square feet at 660 North Capitol. The result is a modern, welcoming space that fosters collaboration, innovation, and meaningful in-person engagement among staff.

Beyond creating a workspace that better reflects ICMA's aspirations, the move was also a strategic business decision. By leveraging favorable market conditions and tenant concessions, ICMA was able to build a high-quality office environment while achieving approximately $500,000 in annual occupancy cost savings. Equally important, the transition enabled the association to exit the business of owning commercial real estate, allowing leadership and resources to remain focused on advancing ICMA's mission rather than managing property assets.

The move represents more than a change of address. It reflects ICMA's commitment to aligning its operations and facilities with the organization's evolving needs and long-term goals. Through a smaller, more efficient office footprint and a transition away from commercial real estate ownership, ICMA strengthened its financial sustainability while creating a modern, welcoming environment that supports collaboration, engagement, and service to members.

If you get to our Nation's Capital, please come visit!

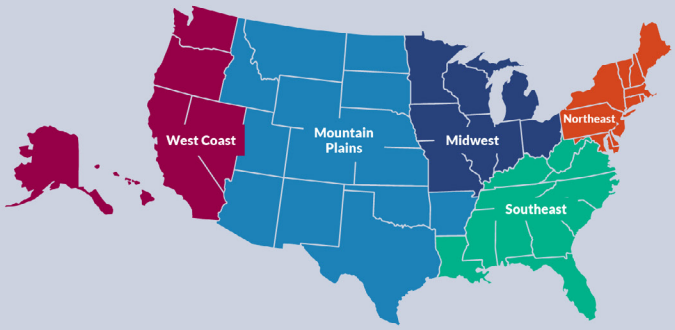
Organizational Restructuring

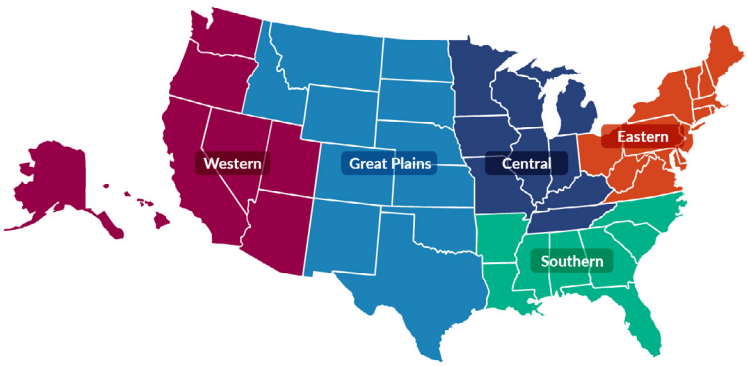
FY 2026 was the first full year for ICMA to live in the new reality of functioning without the technical assistance work supported for 40 years by USAID. The organization responded by doubling down on #MembersMatter and internalizing for ourselves what it means to be #CommittedToTheCore. Our members are at the core of what we do, so the organization will continue to identify programming that supplements and enhances the member experience and rebuild a business model that encourages innovation and resiliency.

Modernizing Governance Structures and Processes

In 2025, ICMA's Executive Board approved a series of significant governance reforms designed to strengthen representation, modernize organizational language, and support a more transparent nominations process. Acting on recommendations developed through a two-year Governance Task Force process, the board approved the first realignment of ICMA's U.S. regions since 1973. The realignment was undertaken pursuant to the ICMA Constitution's direction that regions contain approximately equal numbers of voting members and reflects significant changes to the association's membership over the past five decades. The new regional structure creates substantially greater balance among the five

U.S. regions, helping to ensure more equitable representation on the executive board, while maintaining ICMA's commitment to strong international participation. The new regions will take effect in October 2026 with the launch of ICMA's 2026—2027 nominations and elections process and will be implemented through newly updated regional nominating agreements developed to reflect the revised regional structure.





In addition to regional realignment, the board-approved governance reforms, including advancing constitutional amendments to replace the term "corporate member" with "voting member," better reflecting the role of members eligible to participate in association governance and avoiding confusion with ICMA's corporate partner programs. The board also approved revisions to the nominations and elections process requiring all executive board candidates to submit a petition demonstrating support from fellow voting members before consideration by a regional nominating committee.

Finally, members approved the elimination of the designated non-CAO seat on the executive board, reflecting the increasing success of non-CAO members in competing for and winning board positions through the standard regional election process and creating a more equitable framework for board service. Each of these proposed changes were approved by ICMA's voting membership on the December 2025 special election ballot. Together, these changes modernize ICMA's governance framework, promote transparency, and help ensure that the association's governance structure continues to reflect and serve its diverse membership.

Growing Non-Dues Revenue Through the ICMA Partner Program

ICMA's Partner Program is a vital component of our business model. ICMA recognizes that the private sector provides essential services to our members. Making valued products, services, and solutions known to our members generates non-dues revenue that enables ICMA to provide our programs, benefits, and services.

In FY 2026, ICMA welcomed three new partners, bringing the total to 22. Together, partners contributed more than $2 million in revenue that supports member programming.

ICMA's FY 2026 partners are listed here in alphabetical order:

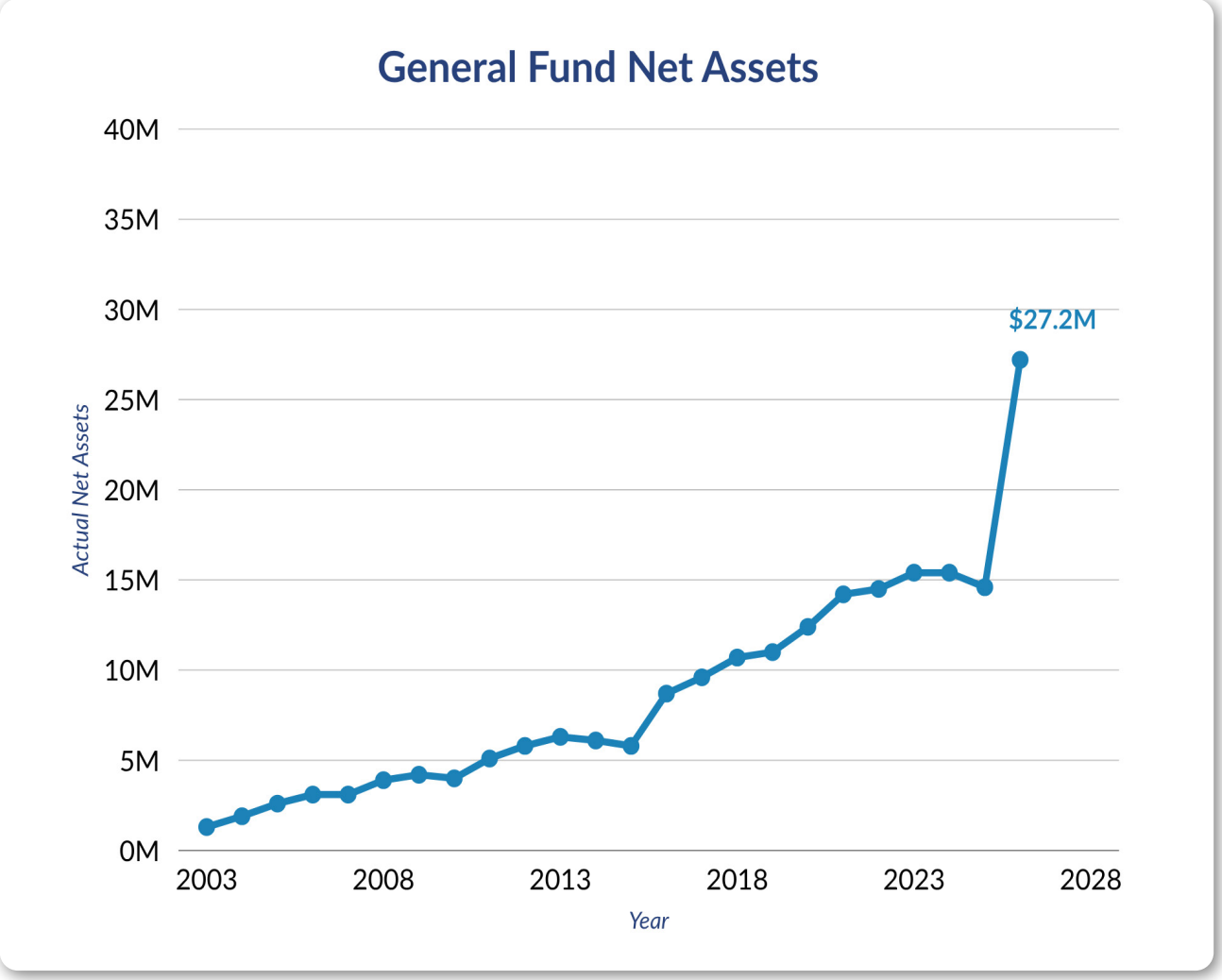
This list includes partners who were part of ICMA's annual partner program July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026.

Financial Information

FY 2025 Statement of Activities

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	TOTAL
Conferences and meetings	7,028,481		7,028,481
Grants and contracts	6,259,562		6,259,562
Membership dues	6,214,134		6,214,134
Investment income, net	3,298,172	634,715	3,932,887
Royalty income	2,719,125		2,719,125
Publications, subscriptions, and advertising	1,524,000		1,524,000
Fees	1,106,680		1,106,680
Contributions	585,400	104,519	689,919
Other	253,581		253,581
Net assets released from donor restrictions	285,917	(285,917)	
Total support and revenue	**29,275,053**	**453,317**	**29,728,370**
EXPENSES			
Program services	19,624,285		19,624,285
Management and general	7,365,107		7,365,107
Total expenses	**26,989,393**		**26,989,393**
Change in net assets before other items	**2,285,660**	**453,317**	**2,738,977**
OTHER ITEMS			
Gain from sale of REIT stock	2,000,000		2,000,000
Net impact of Gates EMO activity	8,231,874		8,231,874
Total other items	**10,231,874**		**10,231,874**
Change in net assets after other items	**12,517,534**	**453,317**	**12,970,851**
Net assets at beginning of year	14,646,924	4,783,025	19,429,949
NET ASSETS AT END OF YEAR	**27,164,458**	**5,236,342**	**32,400,800**

General Fund Net Assets



**The increase in net assets reflects approximately $8.2 million in funding from the Gates Foundation for a multi-year EMO initiative. Of this funding, approximately $5 million is committed to EMO programming over the next two years, and the balance will support future investments in programs and services.*

FY 2026 Supporters of the ICMA Future of Professional Management Fund

Because of the financial support of individuals and organizations who have contributed to the Future of Professional Management Fund, ICMA was able to continue its mission of advocating for professional local government management by supporting the adoption and retention of the council-manager form of government, raising public awareness about the profession, and inspiring a new generation of future local government leaders.

Two significant initiatives were launched in FY 2026 with the support of the Fund. The first was a partnership with the University of North Carolina to create a database cataloging the form of government in U.S. jurisdictions. This database will be the first comprehensive inventory of U.S. governance models. Previously data used to answer questions like "how many U.S. Cities have council-manager vs. mayor-council forms of government" were based on survey responses. This database will allow comprehensive and accurate understanding of governance in the U.S. context.

The second initiative is an academic exploration into "structure, form, and ethics" and the link to professional management. The council-manager form of government was aligned with both the Reform Era of American politics and a connection to the Scientific Management movement that was happening in the early 1900s. The premise is that the key elements of council-manager government create the space for ethical, accountable administration of local governments. The question put forward to researchers is to examine what we have learned in the 100-plus years since the introduction of the Lockport Plan—and if we were "inventing" council-manager government today, what it would look like. Competitive proposals were reviewed from universities across North America and 14 were chosen to receive grants supported by the Fund. This will culminate in a symposium planned for August 2027 that will include the academic research and practitioners responses.

The Fund has a restricted balance of $2M and an additional $1.4M in available in the unrestricted balance as of June 30, 2026.

FY 2026 Supporters of the ICMA Future of Professional Management Fund

These individuals and organizations donated to the Fund in FY 2026 (July 1, 2025–June 30, 2026).

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($15,000 to $19,999)

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($5,000 to $9,999)

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2025-2026
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