



A GUIDE FOR MEMBERS- IN-TRANSITION

Florida City and County Management Association

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|----|
| 1. Introduction | 03 |
| 2. Immediate Steps Checklist..... | 04 |
| 3. FCCMA Resources | 05 |
| 4. ICMA and FCCMA Senior Advisors | 06 |
| 5. Coping with a Job Loss..... | 07 |
| 6. First Impressions Now Happen Online, Not in Person..... | 10 |
| 7. Member-In-Transition Testimonial..... | 12 |
| 8. Experience as a Member-In-Transition | 14 |
| 9. Protecting Your Legal Rights as a Public Employee..... | 15 |
| 10. Legal Representation..... | 18 |
| 11. Financial Resources..... | 19 |
| 12. Relocation Guide..... | 23 |
| 13. What's Next After Resignation/Separation/Termination..... | 25 |
| 14. Exhibit A - FCCMA MIT Policy..... | 28 |
| 15. Exhibit B - SGR Resources Available PDF | 31 |
| 16. Exhibit C - Knowing When to Leave (ICMA Resource)..... | 32 |
| 17. Exhibit D - 10 Points of Change During Transition | 35 |
| 18. Exhibit E - Sample Separation Agreement | 38 |
| 19. Exhibit F - Sample Employment Contract | 45 |
| 20. Exhibit G - Directory of Executive Search Firms (ICMA resource) | 53 |

INTRODUCTION

Years ago, I faced a difficult time following a forced separation from my City Manager position after serving there for 10 years. The morning after, I distinctly recall looking at my key ring, which held only a house key and a car key. My empty key ring had become a symbol of lost authority and prestige.

The local government political environment is very volatile. Many managers and staff are forced out of their positions as changes on the dais occur, a common experience in local government for many years. Unfortunately, I don't see the situation moderating. In fact, the pace of terminations has seemingly increased through no fault of the managers or staff.

Know that you are not alone in your time of job change. Family, friends, and colleagues are a vital support network during your job transition. This guide contains valuable information to assist you in your journey. Do not despair. Use the assistance this guide offers; network with colleagues; and care for yourself emotionally, physically, and spiritually during your job transition. This time is an opportunity to assess your skills, interests, and goals. Consider job transition time as a type of personal sabbatical. Local government needs your expertise and experience.

As a member of the Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) and the International City/County Management Association (ICMA), you may participate in two separate programs for "Members-In-Transition" (MITs).

For its part, FCCMA is committed to supporting MITs through members who care about you. Many MITs that I've worked with over the years have commented about encouraging calls, emails, and job leads they've received from colleagues and Senior Advisors. This is the way a profession should work: as a community of shared interests and concerns.

My empty key ring experience became an opportunity to make a positive career move from Illinois to Florida. Along the way, I had the support of family, friends, and colleagues.

I served as an ICMA/FCCMA Senior Advisor for 12 years following my retirement from Boynton Beach. I continue to work with MITs as an FCCMA Senior Advisor Emeritus, serving FCCMA and ICMA members.

Respectfully,

Kurt Bressner, ICMA-CM

Vero Beach

IMMEDIATE STEPS CHECKLIST

- Call or e-mail a Senior Advisor (SA) in your region. As the term advisor indicates, SAs can be a resource, are great listeners, and can provide support and information as you begin the next chapter of your career. A list of SAs is included in this guidebook.
- Know your options. Do not make any decisions until you are satisfied with the separation/severance agreement and have agreed to terms acceptable to you.
- Contact an attorney for legal advice regarding pending severance negotiations and contract disputes and to avoid misunderstandings. A brief list of attorneys is provided in this document.
- Notify Florida City and County Management Association staff at 850.222.9684 or fccma@flcities.com to notify them of your change in status and to receive Members-In-Transition benefits and supportive services from the association.
- Call International City/County Management Association Member Services at 202.962.3680 or email them at membership@icma.org to notify them of your change in status. You can seek advice from their Members-In-Transition staff and search new job postings nationwide at icma.org.
- Check the status of your health insurance coverage and apply for COBRA benefits if necessary.
- Apply for unemployment benefits.
- Evaluate your current financial situation.
- Consider counseling for yourself and your family to assist with the difficult transition. This can be a valuable tool as you cope with a job loss.
- Update and enhance your resume, interview skills, and social media profile.
- Look for interim jobs or special projects.
- Network, call neighboring managers, and stay in contact with SAs. Reach out to your public and private contacts and share that you are in transition and available for temporary assignments.
- Take time for yourself. Grant yourself the time and grace necessary to make the right decisions as you move forward to your next opportunity. Take this opportunity to do the things you never made time for before.



FCCMA RESOURCES FOR MEMBERS-IN-TRANSITION

The benefits listed below are available to Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) members who meet the Members-In-Transition (MIT) criteria based on the FCCMA MIT Policy.

- FCCMA dues waived up to three years while in transition
- Financial assistance up to three years to attend the FCCMA Annual Conference
- Financial assistance up to three years to attend FCCMA on-site training sessions and audio training
- MIT Handbook
- Inclusion on MIT List
- Posting of MIT resumes on FCCMA website
- Benefits through FCCMA Partnership with Strategic Government Resources (SGR):
 1. Registration to attend classes and trainings through SGR
 2. IOPT assessment
 3. Registration to attend live training events through SGR
 4. Registration to attend annual SGR conference

See [Exhibit A](#) for the full FCCMA MIT Policy and [Exhibit B](#) for information on all resources available to MITs through FCCMA's partnership with SGR.

RESPONSIBILITY OF FCCMA MEMBERS:

It is the responsibility of all FCCMA members – especially members of the Board of Directors – to notify FCCMA staff immediately upon learning that a member is in transition. The Membership Committee and the Board have established the following guidelines to assist this effort.

- Any member who learns of another member who is in danger of being unemployed or is already unemployed should notify FCCMA staff as soon as possible.
- Senior advisors/staff will then call the member to offer assistance, explain FCCMA's support programs, and learn the particulars of the member's situation.
- Staff will notify the MIT Committee and the Board of Directors, who will also contact the member.
- Membership Committee Members, Board of Directors, and other FCCMA members are encouraged to keep in touch with the member-in-transition within their respective districts to offer support.
- The membership is encouraged to hire MITs for special projects and/or interim positions whenever possible.
- If there is a local managers' group that meets on a regular basis, MITs should be encouraged to attend as a means of keeping in contact with peers and up to date on current issues.
- FCCMA encourages local/regional associations to waive their membership dues and other fees for a period of three fiscal years for a member-in-transition who meets the criteria outlined in the MIT Policy.

ICMA and Florida City and County Management Association's



Senior Advisor Program

Senior Advisors (formerly range riders) are retired City and County Managers with lengthy experience who are respected within the public management field.

The FCCMA Board of Directors and the Executive Director of the International City/County Management Association jointly appoint Senior Advisors.

As volunteers, Senior Advisors provide, at no cost:

- ▶ Career and employment counsel to members
- ▶ Guidance and counsel to members regarding ethics questions or concerns
- ▶ Assistance to cities and counties with the managerial form of government
- ▶ Assistance to cities and counties that are considering adopting the managerial form of government
- ▶ Assistance to civic groups regarding the managerial form of government
- ▶ Assistance to members-in-transition with guidance and direction as they seek new opportunities in public administration.

Limited Chief Administrative Officer search services are available upon request by the governing board of municipal jurisdictions with a population of under 10,000 or counties under 50,000. Senior Advisors will provide guidance and assistance once a manager/administrator vacancy has been verified, subject to availability. Services may include: outlining to elected officials the placement process based on ICMA guidelines; determining qualifications, compensation and position requirements; assisting local staff with position advertisements; reviewing and recommending semifinalist candidates based on desirable manager attributes established by the governing body and providing assistance to the jurisdiction during the interview phase of the placement process. The governing board shall select finalists for interviews.

Background searches on candidates are not included in the services and should be conducted through qualified individuals or firms retained by the city or county.

Senior Advisors are not “consultants” but serve as colleagues and counselors.

To obtain further information about the Senior Advisor program and its services, contact:

Florida City and County Management Association Senior Advisor Program

P.O. Box 1757, Tallahassee, FL 32302

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***Contact the Coordinator to discuss which Senior Advisor can best meet your needs.**

COPING WITH A JOB LOSS – CONTROL YOUR DESTINY

*By Mark Ryan, Senior Advisor, Florida City and County Management Association
and International City/County Management Association*

Professional local government managers work tirelessly for the betterment of their communities and continuously work to pursue excellence in local government. They are the leaders who take the strategic visions of the community and bring them to reality, provided these priorities are adequately funded. Together with talented teams, local government managers deliver the public service of ensuring public safety, environmental protection, infrastructure improvements and maintenance, and a quality of life the community expects and deserves.

A career in local government management can be very rewarding; however, this profession can sometimes be quite stressful. In the last decade, local government managers have endured the added stress of leading their communities through a global pandemic, including the economic and mental health impacts; the stress of leading a community through the Great Recession of 2007-2008; the pressure of managing a community following natural disasters like hurricanes, fires, and tornadoes; and the challenge of tolerating an era of political discord, fueled by constant social and traditional media that interprets local government politics.

In today's world, the relationship with an elected body can change quickly and abruptly. Events within the community may cause changes in the composition of the council or commission overnight. This can result in added pressure on the local government manager and their ability to satisfactorily meet the needs of the community. This may lead to the decision of a manager to move on for their own personal well-being. Commentary that local government managers can be subjected to by the elected body, citizens, social media, and even from within an organization can take a toll on the mental well-being of the manager.

In a March 1, 2024, article in the International City County Management Association (ICMA) monthly publication, PM Magazine, Former ICMA President (2020-21) James Malloy, ICMA-CM, explored the indicators a local government manager should consider in determining whether to move on. This article is titled *Knowing When to Leave: 10 Indications It May Be Time to Resign your Local Government Position*. According to Malloy, these indicators are:

1. Lack of career growth
2. Unhealthy work environment
3. Mismatch of values
4. Burnout
5. Inadequate compensation
6. Lack of recognition
7. No personal or professional development support
8. Dissatisfaction with job responsibilities or authority
9. Financial instability
10. Health issues



It is noted that this is a summary of the indicators within Malloy's article. To obtain further discussion of each of these items, you are urged to read the full article that is attached to this guidebook. (*Exhibit C*).

Malloy certainly provides the reader with valid reasons to consider when determining whether to make a career move. As stated above, this is an important personal decision that should be made only by consulting partners and individuals you consider close friends and advisors.

As local government managers, we also recognize that we serve at the pleasure of the elected body. This elected body, whose makeup may have changed, will sometimes use its authority to choose to change the community's appointed leadership. Certainly, this is their right.

Because of change, you may enter the realm of being a "Member-In-Transition" (MIT). The loss of a job, expected or unexpected, is a traumatic experience. You have served a community to the best of your abilities with professionalism and pride. The loss of a senior executive position brings about grief very similar to the emotions felt with the loss of a loved one. In many instances, the action of the elected body to make a change in leadership results in media coverage that the executive must see and hear and adds to the emotions of a job loss. This grief has many aspects, including but not limited to sadness, confusion, anger, hopelessness, an attack on your self-esteem, and embarrassment.

An excellent resource a member should consider while coping with these issues is the employer's employee assistance program (EAP). As you enter transition, an attempt should be made to include access to the employer EAP in any severance package. This program can prove to be one of the most valuable resources during your time in transition.

Regrettably, following the termination of a manager, in today's political climate, some elected officials utilize the media as their "bully pulpit" to justify their decision to make a change in leadership. This leads to a further impact on the mental well-being of the manager. MITs are encouraged to limit the reading of articles about your termination. Inevitably, there will be repeated articles or other forms of media, including social media. You will not gain from reading these reports. After all, you were there and lived through the experience.

You may be asked for a comment from the media, asked to give your side of the story, or inclined to make a negative comment in the heat of the moment. You should take the high road and not take that bait. The media is not your friend, and what you say will be readily available for potential future employers to see or hear.

If you are negotiating a severance agreement with your previous employer, it would be beneficial to both parties to indicate that neither party shall make a disparaging comment concerning the other. While this may be difficult to enforce, you would have an executed agreement on this issue should the need for legal action arise.

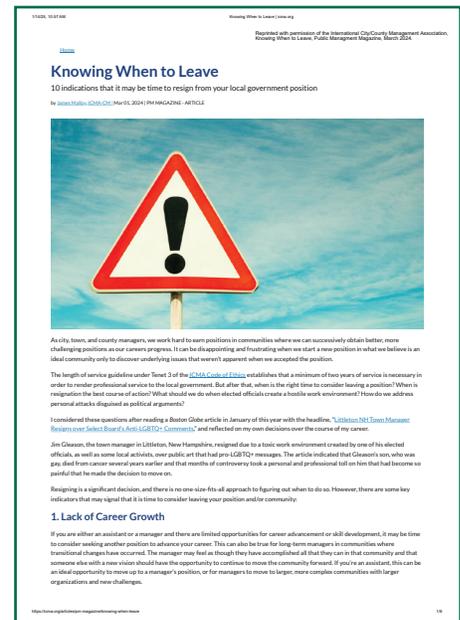


Exhibit C: Knowing When to Leave (p. 32)

When a decision to change the leadership in the community occurs, the local government manager must use this as an opportunity and not a failure. This is emphasized by the late Michael Roberto, past President (1992-93) of the FCCMA, in a June 2001 article in PM Magazine titled: 10 Points of Change During Transition; or Can Someone Throw Me a Rope in the Quicksand? The 10 points to manage a transition created by Roberto, following his own transition in the year 2000, are listed below. Please note: This is a summary of Roberto's 10 points of change; to obtain further discussion of each of these items you are urged to read the full article that is attached to this guidebook. (*Exhibit D*).

1. *Through the transition process, stay in control.*
2. *Begin work early.*
3. *Once you leave, get out of town and take time off.*
4. *Get in physical, mental, and spiritual shape.*
5. *Rediscover your family.*
6. *Get rid of debt and create a financial plan.*
7. *Take your time.*
8. *It is important to be open to the kindness of others.*
9. *Continue to believe in yourself.*
10. *Realize that change and transition are just another opportunity to succeed.*

Gail Sheehy, author of "Understanding Men's Passages," provides validation of many of Roberto's recommendations for managing transition, using recommendations that are applicable to men and women from career counselors Robert J. Graham, M.A. and Robin Holt, M.A. Below you will find some of these paraphrased recommendations.

- Impose a structure. Decide on a time and place to go to work. Make exercise a must. It becomes too easy to be sedentary, and doing nothing is exhausting.
- Ease up on drinking. Alcohol is a depressant. Increasing your drinking to medicate your sadness usually backfires by increasing depression.
- Catch up with whom you've become. Use the time to examine your values and how they may have changed. It will make the next job decision much wiser.
- Use outplacement or counseling services or retain a personal career coach.
- Consider a parallel career. What would you do outside the salaried workforce that has personal meaning and allows you to contribute?
- Explore your creative side. What activity do you do that makes time pass and you don't even know it? (Sleeping doesn't count.)
- Have a physical checkup.

One of the most important messages of this guidebook is that you are not alone. Support is available through family, friends, colleagues, the FCCMA, and Senior Advisors.

Anita Fain Taylor, an MIT who wrote in the 2012 edition of this guidebook, said, "Remember that this is a temporary state – that is why it is called Member-In-Transition. You are not unemployed. You are a professional in career transition. The better you handle your transition, the better person and employee you will be in the future."

MEMBERS IN TRANSITION: First Impressions Now Happen Online, Not in Person

Online reputation management for local government leaders

By Ryder Todd Smith | Jul 01, 2023 | PM MAGAZINE - ARTICLE



Imagine this: you are in a job interview with a recruiter or panel. You made it through the first round and now they are trying to assess whether you would be a good fit. The conversation is flowing and everything seems to be going well until they say, “So, we saw this news article online about why you left a position 10 years ago. Can you tell us what happened there?” Now, you have to explain your side of the story for the hundredth time and hope they understand.

You might think that meeting your potential new employer in person was your chance to make a good first impression: good eye contact, professional appearance, a firm handshake, etc. When, in fact, they have already “met” you by doing the modern-day equivalent of a background check: a Google search. And the old adage rings true: you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

Why Your Online Reputation Matters

Whether you like it or not, the first few search results for your name are your “online reputation.” These are the first bits of information a public agency will find when they do a background check on you as part of the hiring process. Or what reporters and community members will find when they want to learn more about their city/county leader. For younger Gen X and “elder” millennial managers, you may have started seeding your online reputation with blogs and social media while in your teens or early 20s. Was *that* version of you the best one to present to the world?

The internet has become the dominant place to make a first impression, and leaders in the public sector have the most at stake when it comes to their online reputations. The nature of your leadership role in local government puts you in the public eye. At some point, you may have to take an action that upsets someone or creates a controversy that results in media coverage. In the private sector, a mistake or poor decision could just quietly disappear into the ether. In the public sector, these situations can quickly spiral into stories about “wasting taxpayers’ money” or “government mismanagement.” This is part of the burden and responsibility of public service.

If you do not have a strong online presence, others can move quickly to fill the void with their own information. Even worse, one small misstep on your part could lead to search results for your name full of content that is out of your control *and* that sticks around for years.

The good news is that you do not have to passively accept what the internet defines as your online reputation. You can take your future into your own hands through a process called *online reputation management*.

Online reputation management is, broadly, the process of preventing and repairing threats to your online reputation. In practice, it involves building a stronger, positive online presence that you control. Over time, that positive content should mix in with (and potentially outrank) the less desirable search results for your name. That way, when someone looks for information about you, the first impression they should get is what you want them to find.

ICMA Can Help You During a Transition

ICMA recognizes that experiencing a career “transition” is a very difficult situation that many members face at some point in their local government careers. Any job change is difficult, but when it is forced on someone—sometimes, for reasons that often have nothing to do with their job performance—it can be traumatic.

ICMA and its partners has valuable resources for members who are between jobs. The best defense is a strong offense when it comes to your online reputation, which is why ICMA offers an online reputation management service for [members in transition](#) (MITs). ICMA subsidizes this service for MITs through Tripepi Smith, a California-based marketing, technology, and public affairs consulting firm that specializes in serving local governments.

About ICMA's Online Reputation Management Services

The [online reputation management services offering](#) will help ICMA members shape online search results for their name by creating/optimizing personal social media profiles, publishing professional interviews, and/or launching personal websites. ICMA will subsidize the cost of each of the three service packages (up to 50%) for members in transition.

This member benefit provides three different packages to enhance and protect your online reputation:

1. The **Blueprints** package is for those who either do not currently have or do not actively use a LinkedIn profile, Twitter account, and/or Facebook profile.
2. The **Breakground** package is intended for intermediate social media users who are in search of a professional audit. The audit will provide you with an overview of your profiles while ensuring that best practices are being adhered to. In addition, Tripepi Smith will conduct an interview with you to create positive content on the well-respected local government news website, CivicBusinessJournal.com. Lastly, Tripepi Smith will provide prompts for you to author an op-ed article for PublicCEO.com, a digital local government publication that delivers news and insights to over 16,000 city managers, county administrators, public executives, and public employees every weekday.
3. The **Remodel** package is for those who are serious about protecting (or repairing) their online reputation. In addition to the services within the Breakground and Blueprints packages, Tripepi Smith will create a personalized website for you. The team will work with you in gathering content that showcases your professional achievements. Finally, the website will be optimized for major search engine algorithms. This will ensure that major search engines recognize this new website is relevant to your name.

Not a One-and-Done Process

Online reputations require care, feeding, and attention to detail to maintain. It is in your best interest to be proactive rather than reactive. After a negative story appears on a news network, it is likely beyond your control and will be difficult to displace from search results for your name. But if you have already taken steps to “own” at least some of the first page of search results for your name, others will have an uphill battle to insert their own narratives.

Learn More

If you want more control over the first impression your online reputation will make, visit the [ICMA Online Reputation Management Services page](#). There you will find a brochure that explains the three service packages in greater detail and how to get started. Only ICMA members who are in transition are eligible for the subsidy on these services, but anyone interested in this service may email membership@icma.org for more information.

RYDER TODD SMITH is president of Tripepi Smith and Associates Inc.

TESTIMONIAL FROM A MEMBER-IN-TRANSITION

By Alan Rosen, MPA, ICMA-CM

Starting your career and becoming a Member-in-Transition (MIT) likely isn't on your radar. Many local government executives aren't familiar with the term until they face leaving a position. But the reality is clear: Transitioning out of a role is a possibility for everyone. Whether due to external pressures or personal circumstances, preparing for this prospect in advance can benefit your professional journey, even if you never become an MIT.

In January 2021, I began my first role as a county manager in Lake County. It was an exciting, rewarding experience. However, six months later, I left due to political challenges and family medical issues. Adding to the difficulty was my inability to relocate. With my children needing stability to finish school, mobility wouldn't be an option for five more years, which is a significant limitation for city or county manager positions.

To prepare for and navigate through a period of transition in your career, here are my top five recommendations:

1. SAVE MONEY.

If possible, build a financial cushion for a rainy day. When you leave a position, you may or may not receive a severance package. Even if you do, it might not cover all your expenses, such as COBRA health insurance, your mortgage, and other living costs, while you search for your next role. Having some savings can alleviate stress during the transition and provide the flexibility to avoid accepting a suboptimal opportunity. And if you never need it, those savings can serve as an extra nest egg for retirement.



2. GROW YOUR NETWORK.

Cultivating a robust professional network is critical at every stage of your career. However, it becomes especially vital if you find yourself between jobs. Your colleagues and connections will often be the first to offer interim projects or recommend you for short-term positions while you seek something more permanent. Building and maintaining relationships pays dividends during uncertain times.

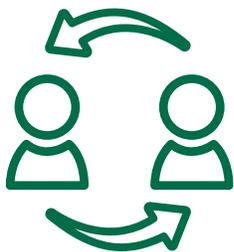
3. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SENIOR ADVISORS.

Senior Advisors with the International City/County Management Association (ICMA) and the Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) are invaluable resources, offering not only extensive knowledge and connections but also empathetic support. Many have faced similar challenges and are eager to assist however they can. Whether you need guidance, advice, or simply someone to listen, don't hesitate to reach out to them. Their experience and willingness to help can make a significant difference in navigating your transition.



4. LEVERAGE ICMA AND FCCMA RESOURCES.

Both the ICMA and the FCCMA offer substantial benefits for MITs. These include free training, conference registrations, memberships, and travel reimbursements for ICMA events. While the specifics vary between the two organizations, benefits typically last up to three years or until you secure your next position. ICMA also hosts monthly online meetings for MITs nationwide, providing a platform to share experiences and gain insights on topics like reputation management, interview preparation, and resume workshops.

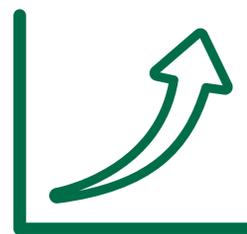


5. BE YOUR OWN ADVOCATE.

When you're "on the outside," it's easy to forget how consuming a manager's role can be. Your colleagues are likely absorbed in their own responsibilities and may not be fully aware of your situation. Take the initiative to reach out. Schedule coffee meetings, phone calls, or catch-ups to update them on your circumstances. Remind them of your expertise and let them know you're available for projects or consulting opportunities.

6. FOCUS ON PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.

Transition periods can be an opportunity to enhance your skills and reconnect with yourself and your loved ones. Consider pursuing certifications that can make you a more effective leader or manager, such as the Federal Emergency Management Association's Incident Command System training or executive coaching credentials. Use the time to reflect, recharge, and prepare to reenter the workforce with renewed focus and resilience.



7. REACH OUT TO FELLOW MITs.

You may not realize it, but some of your colleagues are also navigating transitions and could benefit from your support. Reach out to them. Ask how they're doing and if there's any way you can assist. The most impactful help you can provide is hiring an MIT for interim work or a project. While emotional support is appreciated, the financial challenges of unemployment are often the most pressing. Offering meaningful opportunities not only helps them but also builds goodwill and strengthens your professional community. Remember, what goes around comes around. Your willingness to help others could pave the way for support when you need it most.

While no one aspires to become an MIT, it's a reality worth preparing for. These strategies not only mitigate the challenges of transitioning but also equip you with tools and insights that will serve you throughout your career. Remember, the steps you take to prepare for the unexpected can lead to growth, both professionally and personally.

EXPERIENCE AS A MEMBER-IN-TRANSITION

Robin R. Hayes, Deputy City Manager, City of Deltona

I utilized the Members-In-Transition (MIT) program twice, once in 2021 and then in 2024, and both times the program was somewhat beneficial. I did not understand the program in 2021 for my first couple of months. After working with staff and asking some really dumb questions I began to understand the value of the program. I was lucky in that I knew a few city managers who were heavily involved in the Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA), and they suggested I call.

First, it was nice to hear words of encouragement from peers and information on cities that might be looking to fill specific management positions. Those same members from all over the state called me several times to ask how things were going or if they could be of assistance, and even invited me to visit their city to see how they operate – a lunch and learn event. I was fortunate to find a position as a city manager at a local city within eight months, and I began as the city manager two months later. Overall, the encouragement from a couple of members was the best part of the program during my first exposure.

My second experience in 2024 was even more positive. I knew to call and sign up for the training – especially when I was told it was “free to those in MIT.” Another key point included staying active with FCCMA through group meetings and user groups. Knowledge is key; I had the experience and limited knowledge of how to use amenities offered by FCCMA. Once I signed up for the first webinar, it seemed as if more opportunities became available. I was able to attend a conference, paid for by FCCMA, and I was able to continue with ethics training and other valuable courses, keeping me current in the municipal workplace.

A few peers called and offered encouragement. It is helpful, but I can see how it is awkward. It's hard to speak to someone about the future when they are not sure how long it will take to find a job or if the job will be as a city manager or with a city where they can thrive. I suggest that peers or others write emails as encouragement and offer temporary work. I realize some may not accept the positions, and others may wish to wait it out, but offer. Most of us can bring something to the table: a “special projects” manager for a short time, chair of a committee or team, or work in a specific discipline. Most of us feel the need to continue working, as the fulfillment of serving is key. It is not always about the money, but focusing on the community, being part of a bigger process and networking, as well as being involved in local government. I appreciate the board and the work the FCCMA MIT Committee performs. Keep up the good work. You make us all better community advocates.

PROTECTING YOUR LEGAL RIGHTS AS A PUBLIC EMPLOYEE: A GUIDE FOR CITY AND COUNTY WORKERS

By Tiffany R. Cruz, Esq.

This guide provides public employees with fundamental information about protecting their legal rights in the workplace. While not a substitute for legal advice, it offers basic guidance on documenting workplace issues, selecting legal representation, and understanding when to seek professional counsel.

WHEN TO CONSULT AN ATTORNEY

Consider seeking legal counsel in the following situations:

1. Discrimination or harassment
 - If you experience discrimination based on protected characteristics (race, gender, age, disability, etc.)
 - When facing sexual harassment or a hostile work environment
 - If you've reported discrimination/harassment and faced retaliation
2. Contract and benefits issues
 - Before signing complex employment agreements or severance packages
 - When denied promised benefits or compensation
 - If facing significant changes to employment terms
3. Disciplinary actions
 - When receiving serious disciplinary actions that could affect your career
 - If placed on administrative leave
 - Before signing any disciplinary action documents
4. Workplace safety
 - After reporting safety violations with no corrective action
 - If injured due to unsafe working conditions
 - When facing retaliation for reporting safety concerns



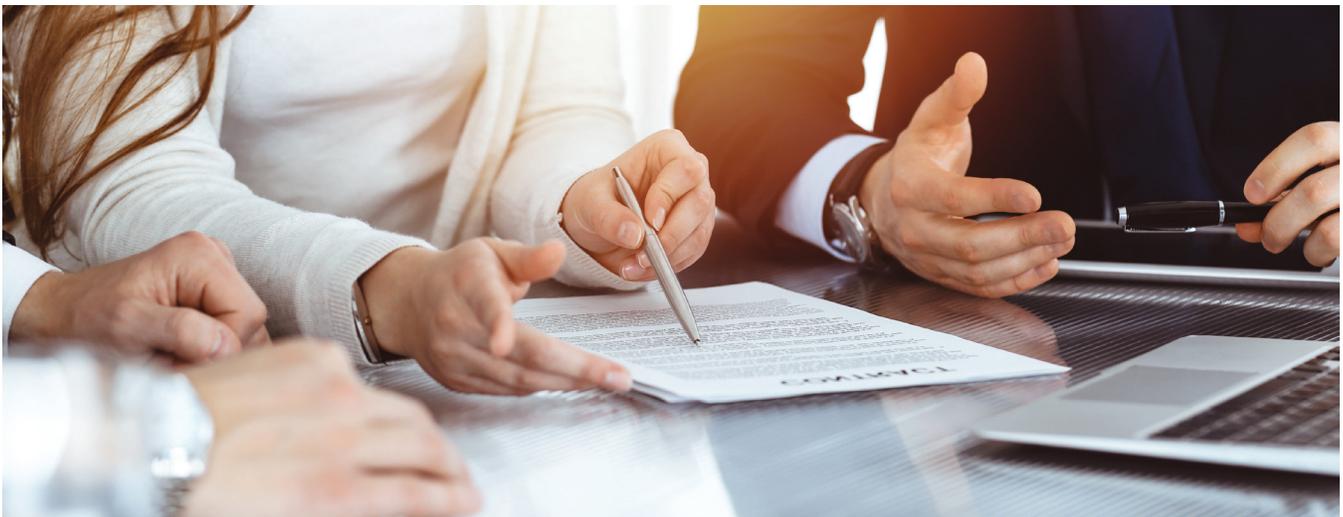
REVIEWING EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Take these steps before signing any employment-related documents:

1. Read everything thoroughly.
 - Review all sections, including fine print.
 - Request time to review documents outside of pressured situations and consult an attorney.
 - Ask for clarification on unclear terms.
 - Pay special attention to:
 - Job duties and expectations
 - Compensation and benefits
 - Disciplinary procedures
 - Termination clauses
 - Noncompete agreements
 - Arbitration clauses
2. Keep records.
 - Request copies of all signed documents.
 - Maintain personal copies in a secure location.
 - Document any verbal agreements or promises in writing.
 - Keep email trails of important communications.

DOCUMENTING WORKPLACE ISSUES

1. Creating a paper trail
 - Record incidents immediately while details are fresh.
 - Include dates, times, locations, and witnesses.
 - Save relevant emails, messages, and documents.
 - Keep copies of performance reviews and evaluations.
 - Document verbal conversations with follow-up emails.
2. Proper documentation format
 - Be objective and factual.
 - Avoid emotional language.
 - Include specific details.
 - Note any witnesses present.
 - Note responses to incidents.
 - Maintain chronological order.
3. Secure storage
 - Keep records outside the workplace.
 - Use personal email for documentation.
 - Back up digital records.
 - Maintain copies of official complaints.
 - Store documents in a secure location



FILING FORMAL COMPLAINTS

1. Internal procedures
 - Review the employee handbook for complaint procedures.
 - Follow the chain of command unless inappropriate.
 - Submit complaints in writing.
 - Keep copies of all submitted documents.
 - Document all follow-up actions.
2. External complaints
 - Understand filing deadlines for government agencies.
 - Know your rights regarding Equal Employment Opportunity Commission complaints.
 - Document all communication with external agencies.
 - Maintain copies of all submitted materials.

PROTECTING YOUR COMMUNICATIONS

1. Professional communication
 - Use professional language in all workplace communications.
 - Avoid emotional responses in written form.
 - Keep personal and work communications separate.
 - Be mindful of social media posts.
2. Confidentiality
 - Understand what information is confidential.
 - Follow proper channels for sensitive information.
 - Protect confidential documents appropriately.
 - Know your whistleblower rights.



SELECTING THE RIGHT ATTORNEY

1. Expertise requirements
 - Look for attorneys specializing in employment law.
 - Seek experience with public sector employment.
 - Consider knowledge of local government operations.
 - Verify experience with similar cases.
2. Research and evaluation
 - Check state bar association standings.
 - Read client reviews and testimonials.
 - Request references when possible.
 - Verify malpractice insurance coverage.
3. Initial consultation
 - Prepare questions about their experience.
 - Discuss fee structures clearly.
 - Evaluate communication style.
 - Assess their understanding of municipal employment.

CONCLUSION

Protecting your legal rights requires vigilance, documentation, and appropriate action. While this guide provides basic information, always consider consulting with a qualified employment attorney for specific situations. Your rights matter, and taking appropriate steps to protect them is crucial for your career and well-being.

LEGAL REPRESENTATION

Florida Attorneys Available and Willing to Represent Managers with Labor Issues (As of November 2024)

The following is a list of labor attorneys in Florida who have extensive experience in labor law, who do not have any known conflicts of interest in representing city and county managers in labor issues, and who have expressed a willingness to do so when contacted by members.

This list is for informational purposes. The hiring of a lawyer is a very important decision that should not be based solely upon this information. The cost associated with this legal representation is the responsibility of the member.

Lanny Russell, Esq.

Smith, Hulsey & Busey
One Independent Drive, Suite 3300
Jacksonville, FL 32202
904.359.7700; Direct 904.359.7798
lrussell@smithhulsey.com
www.smithhulsey.com

Christopher C. Copeland, Esq.

Christopher C. Copeland, P.A.
1003 W. Indiantown Road, Suite 208
Jupiter, FL 33458
561.691.9048; Fax: 866.259.0719
carla@copelandpa.com

Patricia R. Sigman, Esq.

Board-certified labor & employment lawyer
Sigman & Sigman, P.A.
211 Maitland Ave.
Altamonte Springs, FL 32701
407.332.1200; Fax: 407.332.1210
patricia@sigmanlaw.com

Bradley Rothman, Esq.

Board-certified labor & employment lawyer
Weldon & Rothman, PL
2548 Northbrooke Plaza Drive
Naples, FL 34119
239.262.2141; Fax: 239.262.2342
brothman@weldonrothman.com

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Kwall Barack Nadeau, PLLC
304 S. Belcher Road, Suite C
Clearwater, FL 33765
727.441.4947
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Tad Delegal, Esq.

Board-certified labor & employment lawyer
Delegal Poindexter & Underkofler, P.A.
424 East Monroe St.
Jacksonville, FL 32202
904.633.5000
tad@delegal.net

Tiffany R. Cruz, Esq.

Cruz Law Firm, P.A.
325 N. Calhoun St.
Tallahassee, FL 32301
850.701.8838
tiffany@tiffanycruzlaw.com

1. UNDERSTANDING AND NEGOTIATING YOUR SEVERANCE PACKAGE/SEPARATION AGREEMENT

Facing a job loss can be challenging, but understanding your severance terms can help you navigate this transition effectively. Your severance package or separation agreement could provide the financial stability needed during this time, so it's essential to be well-informed and strategic.

KEY STEPS TO TAKE

Understand your options.

Review your severance package thoroughly. This might include choices like receiving a lump sum payment or staying on the payroll with periodic payments. These decisions can affect your eligibility for unemployment benefits, so weigh the pros and cons carefully.

Employment contracts can include a variety of provisions, so it's important to consider all aspects tied to your job beyond the typical items like healthcare. These may include vehicle allowances, organization-owned vehicles, and company-provided cell phones or other electronic devices. Take the time to thoroughly review your contract and proactively plan for any changes as you transition out of the organization.

Plan strategically.

Consider how the terms align with your financial needs and family situation. Consult a tax professional to understand any tax implications associated with different payment options.

Negotiate, if possible.

Don't hesitate to be proactive about the terms of your separation agreement. You may be able to negotiate key aspects such as extended health benefits, outplacement services, or adjustments to restrictive clauses like noncompetes.

Seek expert guidance.

Consulting an employment attorney or financial advisor can provide clarity and ensure your agreement protects your interests. *(See p. 16 for resources.)*

By taking these steps, you can create an exit strategy that minimizes stress and positions you for a smoother transition to your next opportunity.

See *Exhibit E* for a sample separation agreement.

2. HEALTH INSURANCE OPTIONS

If you lose your employer-based health insurance, it's essential to explore your options for coverage. There are two main options for health care coverage: COBRA (and then Conversion) and individual health coverage.

COBRA and then conversion

Under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA), you, your spouse, and dependent children may be able to purchase extended health coverage for up to 36 months in certain situations.

If you or your dependent chooses to elect COBRA continuation coverage instead of special enrollment, you will have another opportunity to request special enrollment in another group health plan once you have exhausted your continuation coverage. To exhaust COBRA continuation coverage, you or your dependent must receive the maximum period of continuation coverage available without early termination. You must request special enrollment within 30 days of the loss of continuation coverage.

Contact your state government to find out if you or your dependents are eligible for public health insurance, like Medicaid, through the ACCESS Florida Program at myflorida.com/accessflorida or the Florida KidCare Health Insurance Program at floridakidcare.org.

You will have 60 days from your date of separation to apply for COBRA. Each employer is required by law to send a COBRA election letter to the person who will lose coverage. Look for this letter, read it carefully, and decide if you want to continue coverage in this manner.

After you exhaust COBRA, you will be offered the Conversion Plan. You have 30 or 31 days, depending on the state, to apply for the conversion plan.

FAQs for employees about COBRA continuation health coverage

Question 1: *What is COBRA health coverage?*

Congress passed the landmark COBRA health benefit provisions in 1986. The law amends the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, the Internal Revenue Code, and the Public Health Service Act to provide continuation of group health coverage that otherwise might be terminated.

Question 2: *What does COBRA do?*

COBRA provides certain former employees, retirees, spouses, former spouses, and dependent children the right to temporary continuation of health coverage at group rates. This coverage, however, is only available when coverage is lost due to certain specific events. Group health coverage for COBRA participants is usually more expensive than health coverage for active employees since the employer usually pays a part of the premium for active employees, while COBRA participants generally pay the entire premium themselves. It may be less expensive, though, than individual health coverage.

Question 3: *Who is entitled to benefits under COBRA?*

There are three elements to qualifying for COBRA benefits. COBRA establishes specific criteria for plans, qualified beneficiaries, and qualifying events:

Plan coverage

Group health plans for employers with 20 or more employees on more than 50% of their typical business days in the previous calendar year are subject to COBRA. Both full and part-time employees are counted to determine whether a plan is subject to COBRA. Each part-time employee counts as a fraction of an employee, with the fraction equal to the number of hours that the part-time employee worked divided by the hours an employee must work to be considered full time.

Qualified beneficiaries

A qualified beneficiary generally is an individual covered by a group health plan on the day before a qualifying event who is either an employee, the employee's spouse, or an employee's dependent child. In certain cases, a retired employee, the retired employee's spouse, and the retired employee's dependent children may be qualified beneficiaries. In addition, any child born to or placed for adoption with a covered employee during the period of COBRA coverage is considered a qualified beneficiary. Agents, independent contractors, and directors who participate in the group health plan may also be qualified beneficiaries.

Qualifying events

Qualifying events are certain events that would cause an individual to lose health coverage. The type of qualifying event will determine who the qualified beneficiaries are and the amount of time that a plan must offer the health coverage to them under COBRA. A plan, at its discretion, may provide longer periods of continuation coverage.

Question 4: How does a person become eligible for COBRA continuation coverage?

To be eligible for COBRA coverage, you must have been enrolled in your employer's health plan when you worked, and the health plan must continue to be in effect for active employees. COBRA continuation coverage is available upon the occurrence of a qualifying event that would, except for the COBRA continuation coverage, cause an individual to lose his or her health care coverage.

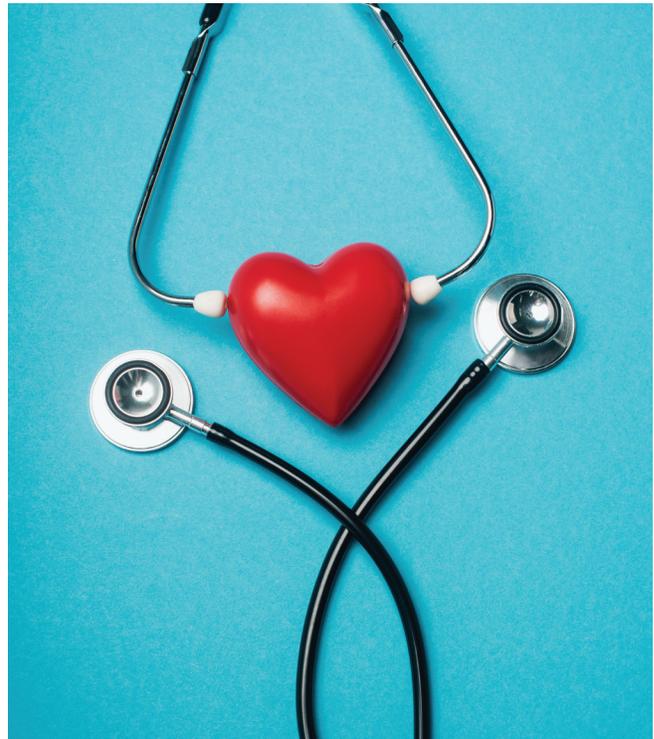
Individual health coverage

If you lose your employer-sponsored health insurance, exploring Individual Health Coverage, also known as Personal Health Coverage, can be a viable option. You can research plans by contacting insurance providers directly or by working with a health insurance agent who represents multiple companies. An experienced agent can offer detailed insights tailored to your specific health needs, which helps you compare options and choose the plan that best fits your situation.

Individual health insurance is often more affordable than COBRA and provides a wider range of options. It is particularly beneficial if you are in good health, though some plans also accommodate pre-existing conditions at reasonable rates. Keep in mind that your certificate of coverage typically applies only when transitioning between group plans, not when moving to an individual policy.

When selecting an individual health plan, you'll generally encounter two primary types: PPO (preferred provider organization) and HMO (health maintenance organization). Within these categories, various plan options are available. Understanding how to maximize your benefits is key to saving money:

- **HMO plans:** These are often co-payment-based and, in most cases, offer open access, meaning you don't need referrals



to see specialists. However, you must stay within the plan's network.

- **PPO plans:** These typically involve deductibles and provide the flexibility to use in-network or out-of-network providers. While this flexibility can be valuable, out-of-network care is usually more expensive, and you may end up paying for freedoms you don't frequently use.

Taking the time to understand the differences between these plans and how to utilize their benefits effectively can help you make informed decisions during this transitional period.

Evaluate other coverage options available to you

If your spouse has access to a health plan through their employer, this could be a valuable option to consider. Under the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), you may be able to enroll in your spouse's plan outside the standard Open Enrollment period. Be sure to evaluate the plan's coverage and costs to ensure it meets your healthcare needs.

3. Financial planning during transition

When a manager is involuntarily terminated, personal finances often become a significant concern for both the manager and their family. Regardless of the severance package offered, it is essential to evaluate and adjust financial plans as soon as possible to navigate this period effectively.

Financial experts recommend maintaining a reserve of 3-6 months' worth of living expenses to cover necessities in the event of a job loss. If such a reserve isn't already in place, developing a financial plan and budget should be a priority. This plan should address both the severance period and the time following its conclusion. Most city/county managers can experience a transition period of three to nine months, but

some extend well over a year. This uncertainty adds to the stress, so it's prudent to analyze your personal finances and adjust accordingly to prepare for the financial burden of a transition.

Severance packages can vary widely, ranging from a lump-sum payment to continued salary for a defined period. Understanding the specifics of your severance agreement is crucial to effectively plan your finances. The key is to anticipate where you will be financially at different stages of the transition and to adjust early to mitigate challenges. Having a clear understanding of your financial realities during the severance period allows for informed decisions and minimizes potential downsides.

ONLINE RESOURCES:

Benefits and your credit

[benefits.gov](https://www.benefits.gov)

[ftc.gov/credit](https://www.ftc.gov/credit)

Homeowner assistance

[federalreserve.gov/pubs/foreclosure](https://www.federalreserve.gov/pubs/foreclosure)

[995hope.org](https://www.995hope.org)

[makinghomeaffordable.gov](https://www.makinghomeaffordable.gov)

Managing fiscal resources

Mission Square (formerly ICMA/RC) has excellent information on managing financial resources when in transition. Here is the link to these free materials:

<https://www.missionsq.org/for-individuals/education/employment-transition-resources>

Tax assistance

[irs.gov](https://www.irs.gov)

The IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) Program offer free tax help for taxpayers who qualify.

[irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep](https://www.irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep)

GUIDE: KEY CONSIDERATIONS WHEN RELOCATING FOR A JOB

By Sarah Mirus, Realty Connect

Relocating for a job is a significant decision that requires careful thought and planning. Here are the most important factors to evaluate before making the move:

1. Cost of living

- Compare the cost of living in the new location to your current one.
- Research housing prices, rental costs, utilities, groceries, and transportation expenses.
- Consider differences in state income tax, property tax, and sales tax.

2. Salary and benefits

- Determine if your new salary aligns with the cost of living in the area.
- Evaluate benefits such as relocation assistance, healthcare, and retirement plans.
- Assess job stability and opportunities for career growth.

3. Housing requirements and neighborhood considerations

- Does your new job require you to live within the municipality or a specific mile radius? If so, what is the time frame to secure housing within that area?
- Research neighborhoods based on commute time, amenities, and lifestyle preferences.
- If purchasing a home, look into real estate trends and market conditions.

4. Quality of life

- Explore the municipality's culture, entertainment, dining, and recreational options.
- Consider the local climate and how it aligns with your preferences.
- Assess commute times, public transportation, and traffic conditions.

5. Family and social impact

- If you have a family, research school quality, childcare options, and extracurricular activities.
- Consider how the move will affect your partner's career and employment prospects.
- Think about the distance from family and friends and how often you'll be able to visit.

6. Job market and networking opportunities

- Research the local job market in case you need to explore future opportunities.
- Identify professional networking groups and industry presence in the area.

7. Moving and relocation costs

- Find out if your municipality offers relocation assistance or reimbursement.
- Get quotes for moving expenses, storage, and temporary housing if needed.
- Factor in travel costs for home-hunting trips and moving logistics.

8. Legal and administrative considerations

- Update your driver's license, vehicle registration, and voter registration.
- Understand local laws and regulations that may differ from your current location.
- Transfer utilities, insurance policies, and medical records.

9. Trial visit

- If possible, visit the new area before making a final decision.
- Explore neighborhoods, commute routes, and local amenities firsthand.

10. Long-term perspective

- Consider how this move aligns with your career and personal goals.
- Weigh the pros and cons carefully before committing to the relocation.

FINAL THOUGHTS

Relocating for a job can open exciting new opportunities, but it requires thorough planning. By evaluating all factors ahead of time, you can ensure a smoother transition and a positive experience in your new location. If you need relocation assistance, Realty Connect is available to help.

Visit relocationspecialistsusa.com, call 407.796.1534, or email relocationspecialistusa@outlook.com.

WHAT'S NEXT AFTER RESIGNATION/SEPARATION/TERMINATION: RESOURCES TO MOVE FORWARD

UNEMPLOYMENT RESOURCES

Cellar Legal, P.A.

[10 Things Every Employee Must Do Before and After Being Fired – Cellar Legal, P.A.](#)

Florida Commerce

[Apply for Benefits – FloridaJobs.org](#)

Florida Department of State. SUNBIZ (Start a consulting business)

[Start a Business – Division of Corporations – Florida Department of State](#)

Glassdoor

[7 Things to Do Immediately if You Get Fired](#)

Indeed (Advice/Steps after separation from job)

[“I Got Fired, Now What?” How To Respond and What To Do Next | Indeed.com](#)

Ramsey

[What to Do if You're Laid Off \(and How to Prepare\) – Ramsey](#)

YouTube: Filing Unemployment Claim in Florida

[Filing for unemployment Florida - YouTube](#)

PENSION RESOURCES

Florida Retirement System (FRS): Pension Plan Options

[MyFRS](#)

FRS: List of additional pension-related resources (advisors, financial planning and counseling, calculators, etc.)

[MyFRS: FRS Resources Links](#)

FRS. List of Participating Employers

[part-emp.pdf](#)

Mission Square Retirement (ICMA-RC)

[MissionSquare Retirement Account Access](#)

Nationwide: List of government plans

[Deferred Compensation Plans by State – Nationwide](#)

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT JOB BOARDS AND RESOURCES

Florida Association of Counties

[Government Jobs – Florida Association of Counties](#)

Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA)

[Job Listings – FCCMA.org](#)

Florida League of Cities

[FLCityJobs – Florida City Jobs](#)

Florida local and regional leagues of cities (Each league may have a job board)

[Local & Regional League of Cities](#)

International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

[Job Posts | icma.org](#)

Florida Commerce
[Job Search Resources – FloridaJobs.org](#)
National Association of Counties (NACo)
[County Jobs - National Association of Counties](#)
National League of Cities
[National League of Cities \(NLC\), NLC Jobs Online|Find Your Career Here](#)
State and local internet directory. Florida state, county, and municipal websites
[Florida Local Business, Insurance, and Government Resources](#)
State and local internet directory (All states, county, and municipal websites)
[State & Local Business, Auto Insurance, & Government Contacts](#)
State municipal leagues (Each state league may have a job board)
[State Municipal Leagues - National League of Cities](#)

GOVERNMENT RECRUITMENT WEBSITES

Affion Public
[Executive Search | Affion Public](#)
American Association of Municipal Executives
[City manager resignations, terminations, retirements \(RTR\), and job board. \(19\) LinkedIn](#)
Baker Tilly
[Job Opportunities | Sorted by Posting Date descending | Baker Tilly Public Sector Executive Recruitment](#)
Berkley Group
[Jobs | Berkley Recruitment](#)
Berkley Group, LLC
[CAREERS | Berkley Group LLC](#)
Bob Murray & Associates
[Bob Murray & Associates](#)
Careers in Government
[Jobs | Careers in Government](#)
Clear Career Professionals
[Career Opportunities | Clear Career Professionals, LLC](#)
Colin Baenziger & Associates
[Colin Baenziger & Associates, Municipal Executive Search and Recruiting](#)
Developmental Associates.
[Job Opportunities | Sorted by Job Title ascending](#)
GovHR
[GovHR Career Center | GovHR USA](#)
GovtJobs
[Government Executive Search Firms – GovtJobs](#)
Government Jobs (NeoGov)
[GovernmentJobs | City, State, Federal & Public Sector Jobs](#)
Government Professional Solutions
[Recruitments | Government Professional Solutions](#)

ICMA Directory of Search Firms
[Directory of Executive Search Firms PM April 2019.pdf](#)

Indeed
[Job Search | Indeed](#)

LinkedIn
[\(23\) Jobs | LinkedIn](#)

Mercer Group Associates
[Current Searches – Mercer Group Associates](#)

Mercer Group, Inc. Florida
[Executive Recruiting Mercer Group Florida](#)

Municipal Resources, Inc.
[Executive Recruitment | Municipal Resources Inc. – Management, Software, Finance, Consulting, Personnel Services](#)

Municipal Solutions
[Municipal Solutions Recruiting](#)

MuniTemps
[Municipal Staffing Solutions & Local Government Recruiters](#)

Prothman
Prothman

Ralph Andersen & Associates
[Career Opportunities | Ralph Andersen & Associates](#)

SGR
[SGR Job Board](#)

Slavin Management Consultants
[Slavin Management Consultants - Executive Search - Current Recruitments](#)

S. Rene Narloch & Associates
[Current Searches | srnarlochassociates](#)

Sumter Local Government Consulting
[Executive Search Services | Sumter Local Government Consulting](#)

DEMOGRAPHIC RESOURCES

BEBR Bureau of Economic and Business Research
[B.E.B.R. – Bureau of Economic and Business Research | Data At Your Fingertips](#)

Florida Demographics
[Florida Demographics | Current Census Data](#)

Florida Legislature’s Office of Economic and Demographic Research
[Population & Demographics](#)

National Association of Counties (NACo) County Explorer (Specific County Data)
[NACo County Explorer](#)

U.S. Census Bureau
[Census.gov | U.S. Census Bureau Homepage](#)

MEMBERS-IN-TRANSITION POLICY

1. Definition of Members-In-Transition (MIT):

- 1.1. A Member-In-Transition is an individual whose last professional position held was in the local government sector and he or she was a full member in good standing of the Association.
- 1.2. The member in good standing has resigned his/her position either voluntarily or involuntarily.
- 1.3. The member must be actively seeking employment by pursuing local government positions throughout the state and/or in other states, provinces or countries having members of a professional local government management association.
- 1.4. Members-In-Transition will be allowed to stay in MIT status for three years from date of termination. After that three-year period, they will not be eligible for financial assistance under the MIT Program.
- 1.5. A MIT accepting interim local government employment, who chooses to or is prohibited from actively seeking employment with other government entities, will have their eligibility for MIT benefits suspended during interim employment.
- 1.6. It is the member's responsibility to notify Association staff they have become an MIT, in order to receive MIT benefits.
- 1.7. It is the member's responsibility to notify Association staff if a permanent position is obtained.
- 1.8. A Member-In-Transition will not be a candidate for elected public office while receiving MIT benefits per the Code of Ethics.

2. Benefits Available to MITs

- 2.1. Dues While in Transition
 - 2.1.1. FCCMA dues will be waived for a period of three fiscal years for a member-in-transition who meets the above-described criteria. During this time, the MIT must sign the annual dues waiver including the pledge to the Code of Ethics and complete the annual four hours of ethics training.
 - 2.1.2. The eligibility for MIT benefits will be provided in six (6) month increments. Every six months Members-In-Transition will be contacted via email and required to verify they are still an MIT actively seeking employment by pursuing local government positions throughout the state and/or in other states, provinces or countries having members of a professional local government management association. If no response is received within 15 business days, an MIT will be deemed employed, removed from the MIT list and invoiced for dues.
- 2.2. Financial Assistance for MITs to Attend the Conference
 - 2.2.1. Keeping in close contact with fellow Association members is very important during the time of transition; therefore, the Association Board has approved a policy to help members-in-transition attend the annual Association conference. The financial assistance provided for the annual conference is:
 - 2.2.2. Waiver of conference registration fees for up to three years.
 - 2.2.3. 100% of the hotel room rate for Annual Conference.

- 2.2.4. No meal reimbursement will be provided.
- 2.2.5. Any additional training classes, activities, etc., will be the financial responsibility of the MIT attendee.
- 2.3. Financial Assistance for MITs to Attend Onsite Training Sessions
 - 2.3.1. For MITs it is difficult, yet important, that they remain current with trends and issues; network with fellow managers; promote professional development; and have opportunities to maintain their Credentialed Manager status. Therefore, the Association will provide the following assistance for MITs:
 - 2.3.2. Complimentary registration to attend onsite training sessions for up to three years.
- 2.4. Financial Assistance for MITs to Attend the Winter Institute
 - 2.4.1. There is no financial assistance available for MITs. If a cancellation occurs and no refund will be sent to the member, an email will be sent to the MITs offering a free registration to an MIT (on a first-come, first-served basis).
- 2.5. Members-In-Transition Handbook
 - 2.5.1. A handbook which contains pertinent information to MITs is emailed to Association members who are in danger of being unemployed or are already unemployed. This handbook will be available to all FCCMA members on the Association website.
- 2.6. Publication of MIT List
 - 2.6.1. While Members-In-Transition are allowed to stay on the MIT list for three years and after the three-year period will not be eligible for financial assistance under the MIT Program; they will, however, be allowed to remain on the MIT list if their annual dues are paid and they remain a member in good standing.
- 2.7. Posting of MIT Resumes on Association Website
 - 2.7.1. MITs are eligible to have their resumes posted on the Association's website, should the Board of Directors allow such postings.
 - 2.7.2. An acknowledgment and disclaimer will be completed by each user and will be kept on file. Similarly, a disclaimer will be posted on the website for all posted items.
- 2.8. Executive Search Firms
 - 2.8.1. MIT's are eligible to work with partnered executive search firms to assist in the job transition process.

3. Organized Response to MITs

- 3.1. Responsibility of Association Members

Recognizing that it is the responsibility of all Association members—especially members of the Board of Directors—to notify the Association staff immediately upon learning that a member is in transition, the Membership Committee and the Board have established the following guidelines to assist in this effort:

 - 3.1.1.1. Any member who learns of another member who is in danger of being unemployed or is already unemployed should notify Association staff as soon as possible.

- 3.1.1.2. Senior advisors and/or staff will then call the member to offer assistance, explain FCCMA's support programs, gather pertinent contact information and learn of the particulars of the members' situation.
- 3.1.1.3. Staff will notify the Membership Committee and the Board of Directors, who may also contact the member.
- 3.1.1.4. Membership Committee members, Board of Directors and other Association members are encouraged to keep in touch with the member-in-transition within their respective districts to offer support.
- 3.1.1.5. The membership is encouraged to hire MITs for special projects and/or interim positions whenever possible.
- 3.1.1.6. If there is a local managers' group that meets on a regular basis, MITs should be encouraged to attend as a means of keeping in contact with peers and up to date on current issues.
- 3.1.1.7. FCCMA encourages local/regional associations (PBCCMA, BCCMA, etc.) to waive their membership dues and other fees for a period of three fiscal years for a member-in-transition who meets the above described criteria.

FCCMA & SGR

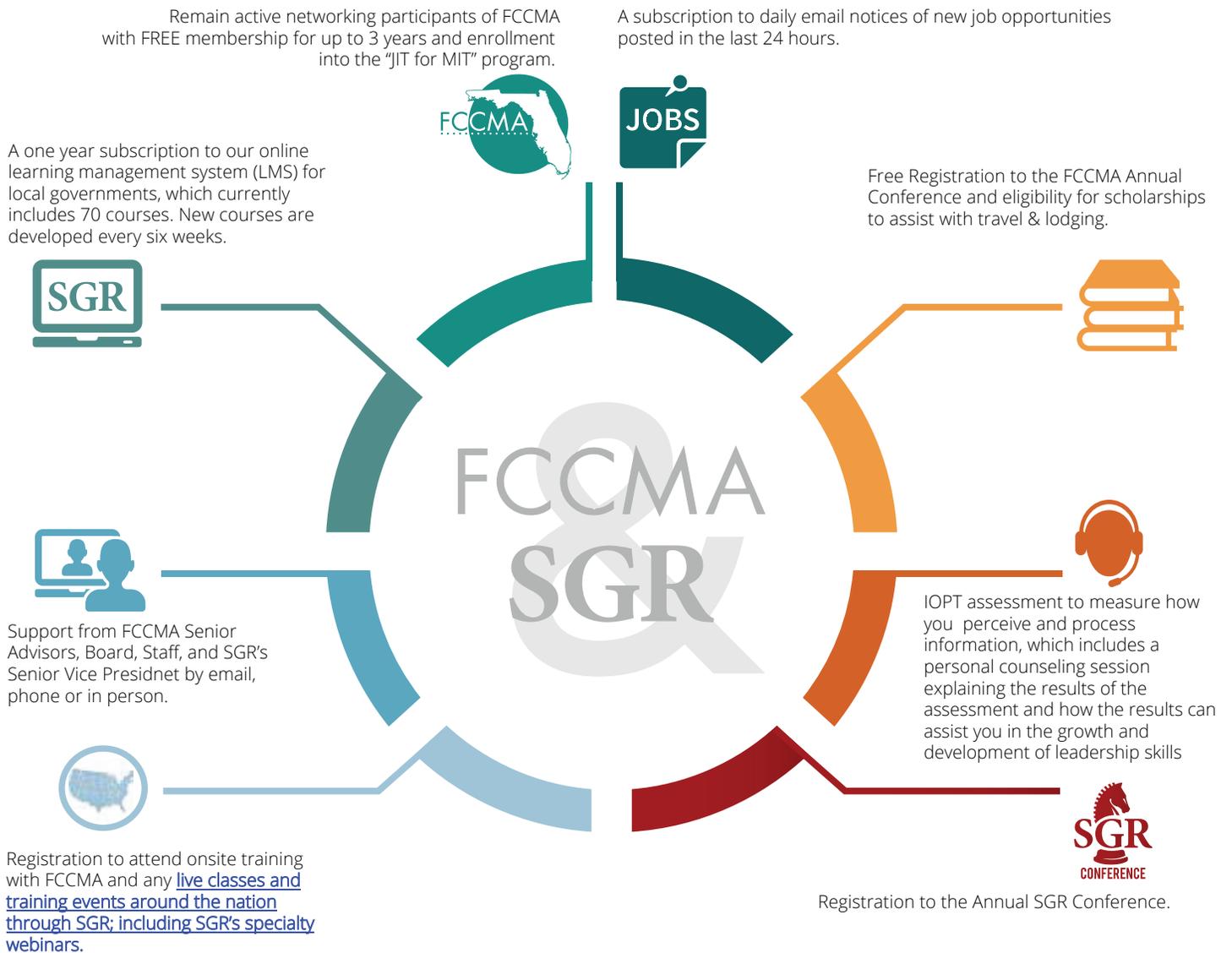
SUPPORT MANAGERS-IN-TRANSITION

Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA) and Strategic Government Resources (SGR) are partnering to support Managers-in-Transition (MIT). Together we can help you search for your next opportunity, provide assistance in personal and professional career development, and more.

FCCMA is proud to serve as a personal and professional support network, for local government leaders at all points of their careers.

SGR helps local governments recruit, assess, and develop innovative, collaborative, authentic leaders and is proud to support FCCMA in their efforts to provide practical support to MITs.

As a Manager-in-Transition (MIT) and a member of FCCMA, you will have FREE access to all of the following services to assist you in your in your personal and professional career development.



To take advantage of these free services please contact SGR's Senior Vice President, **Douglas Thomas** at DouglasThomas@GovernmentResource.com or by phone at (863) 860-9314.



Knowing When to Leave

10 indications that it may be time to resign from your local government position

by [James Malloy, ICMA-CM](#) | Mar 01, 2024 | PM MAGAZINE - ARTICLE



As city, town, and county managers, we work hard to earn positions in communities where we can successively obtain better, more challenging positions as our careers progress. It can be disappointing and frustrating when we start a new position in what we believe is an ideal community only to discover underlying issues that weren't apparent when we accepted the position.

The length of service guideline under Tenet 3 of the [ICMA Code of Ethics](#) establishes that a minimum of two years of service is necessary in order to render professional service to the local government. But after that, when is the right time to consider leaving a position? When is resignation the best course of action? What should we do when elected officials create a hostile work environment? How do we address personal attacks disguised as political arguments?

I considered these questions after reading a *Boston Globe* article in January of this year with the headline, "[Littleton NH Town Manager Resigns over Select Board's Anti-LGBTQ+ Comments](#)," and reflected on my own decisions over the course of my career.

Jim Gleason, the town manager in Littleton, New Hampshire, resigned due to a toxic work environment created by one of his elected officials, as well as some local activists, over public art that had pro-LGBTQ+ messages. The article indicated that Gleason's son, who was gay, died from cancer several years earlier and that months of controversy took a personal and professional toll on him that had become so painful that he made the decision to move on.

Resigning is a significant decision, and there is no one-size-fits-all approach to figuring out when to do so. However, there are some key indicators that may signal that it is time to consider leaving your position and/or community:

1. Lack of Career Growth

If you are either an assistant or a manager and there are limited opportunities for career advancement or skill development, it may be time to consider seeking another position to advance your career. This can also be true for long-term managers in communities where transitional changes have occurred. The manager may feel as though they have accomplished all that they can in that community and that someone else with a new vision should have the opportunity to continue to move the community forward. If you're an assistant, this can be an ideal opportunity to move up to a manager's position, or for managers to move to larger, more complex communities with larger organizations and new challenges.

2. Unhealthy Work Environment

A toxic workplace culture where you may have serious conflicts with colleagues or your elected officials, similar to that experienced by the Littleton town manager, can raise stress levels beyond the normal, day-to-day stress that local government managers face. Other times there may be persistent stress points in the community that are outside the manager's control that negatively impact your career or well-being, creating an unhealthy work environment. In Littleton, hateful comments from people in the community, including one of his elected officials, combined with his own family situation, created a toxic workplace in which the manager was better off leaving that position in a professional manner and seeking opportunities elsewhere.

3. Mismatch of Values

Misalignment with your elected officials' values, or ethical concerns you may have with actions they take, can lead to both dissatisfaction and discomfort. Tenet 6 of the ICMA Code of Ethics establishes that we need to recognize that our elected officials are accountable to the community for the decisions they make, and our role is to be responsible for implementing those decisions. At times, these decisions may not align with our own values, beliefs, or professional opinions, but we must implement those decisions just the same. However, a sustained period of misaligned values creates additional stress, and potentially ethical issues, for us as managers. It can indicate that it's time to begin seeking a position in a community with values more closely aligned with our own.

4. Burnout

Many communities have the pedal to the metal when it comes to taking on too many challenges all at once. If you consistently feel overwhelmed, exhausted, and unable to maintain a healthy work-life balance, it might be a sign of burnout. This can ultimately begin affecting your work performance, professionalism, health, and ability to juggle the multiple priorities that need your attention. Unfortunately, this is sometimes an issue recognized by our colleagues or families before we even recognize it ourselves. There is value in a regular check-in with yourself. Take a minute to determine whether you need to make changes at work. Add staff (if possible) to spread the workload, or work with your elected officials to establish more realistic goals that are within the organization's capacity to attain. If this isn't possible, it may be appropriate to seek a different position in another community that provides greater support to the staff and/or establishes realistic goals for the organization.

5. Inadequate Compensation

The time to establish your salary is when you are negotiating your initial contract--before the hard work even begins. After that initial contract, you can use established salary surveys conducted by your state association (if they do an annual survey) or undertake your own survey of comparable communities when you are renegotiating your contract. This should be done regularly to ensure you continue to be paid fairly based on the comparable communities in your area.

At some point, you may find that you're no longer being compensated fairly compared to other similar communities within your area or statewide standards for managers. This can be due to changes in market conditions, rapid turnover in your area, or other factors. You should meet with your elected officials and review the information you've developed to discuss your salary. While never an easy discussion to have, in the long run, it's better for the community and for you. If your elected officials are unwilling to increase your compensation to an equitable, competitive wage based on the size, budget, and complexity of the community (or if the community does not have the capacity to do so), it may be time to seek a position with another community that will consider your professional experience and will compensate you for that value.

6. Lack of Recognition

Sometimes it's not compensation, stress, unhealthy work environments, community values, or any other reason other than the effort you and your team put forth is simply not appreciated. Our elected officials sometimes fail to recognize the motivational power of acknowledging the efforts that we and our staffs make every day, year after year. Feeling unappreciated or undervalued for your hard work and achievements can be demotivating, and it may be a sign for you to consider a change in position in favor of a community that recognizes, encourages, and values staff for continuously providing high-quality services to the community.

7. No Personal or Professional Development Support

A lack of training, mentorship, or support for your personal and professional development can limit your career growth. This is particularly true for assistants in our field, but is also true for managers. We work in a dynamic profession where we constantly need to evolve our skills and knowledge of best practices. If the community that you are working for has high expectations, but does not support continued professional development, then it may be time to consider a career change to a community that will provide the level of support for professional development opportunities to ensure that you can continue to develop your skills in all areas of municipal management.

8. Dissatisfaction with Job Responsibilities or Authority

If your day-to-day tasks don't align with your interests and skills, it can lead to boredom or frustration. This can be an issue related to the legal authority under which each of us works. That authority may be granted by a state law, local charter, or special act. In some cases, the only legal authority may be granted through a job description, which may be changed at any time by the elected officials in the community. Often, the manager is given tasks to undertake and staff to supervise, but the manager may not be granted the authority to effectively manage tasks, have decision-making authority, or the ability to reorganize the organization to provide services more effectively.

In other cases, the manager may not be the appointing authority or have supervisory authority over staff, which can create a situation where there are expectations that cannot be fulfilled because the manager is burdened with staff that may have been hired on a political basis rather than for the skills necessary for the position. This can be frustrating professionally, and if the community is not willing or interested in addressing this type of issue through establishing adequate legal authority for the manager, then it's likely a good time to begin seeking a new position.

9. Financial Instability

If the community is facing financial difficulties, it can create a multitude of issues, but also opportunities. This is not necessarily a reason to seek a new position. However, it can create a stressful situation, particularly if it requires service cuts, staff layoffs, operational changes, or a need to realign budgets. Depending on how a community reacts, this can be good because it gives you the opportunity to re-establish realistic operational levels and reimagine services.

Alternatively, it can turn out bad, as the manager may be blamed for taking the necessary steps and recommending solutions that the elected officials do not support. There are also situations where the manager may be making recommendations to correct the financial situation, and the elected officials do not follow through to approve the changes, so the manager is left with a budgetary situation that may not be balanced and could eventually result in negative long-term financial consequences, such as bond rating downgrades, audit issues, and potentially even legal issues. Depending on how the elected officials, staff, and community react, this may be a time when a manager needs to consider leaving a position to protect their mental health, reputation, and career.

10. Health Issues

Let's face it, being a local government manager can be a demanding lifestyle. You will have long days, multiple deadlines to meet, multiple elected officials that you need to satisfy, multiple changing priorities, staff issues, legal issues, labor issues, community demands, and financial management challenges. All of this in addition to unplanned crises that can occur and can derail your well-planned, well-organized schedule. This can lead to massive amounts of stress, and if you don't have a healthy way to offset that stress, it can lead to physical or mental health conditions. Other times, a manager may have a health condition that prevents them from fulfilling their obligations. If your position is negatively impacting your physical or mental health, or if you have a health condition that requires more of your time than is allowed, this may be a time to consider a change.

My Own Experiences

Looking back at my own career, some of these same factors led to my career-changing decisions. My first position was as a county manager, and I was already considering making the move into municipal government. When one of the county commissioners I worked for became difficult, I decided to let the board know that my current contract would be my last, and this encouraged me to get serious about making the change.

My second position was as a village manager in a community where the majority of the elected officials were removed from office for corruption. This included the mayor, who was then subsequently re-elected in a special election. His first day back in office, he dropped by to let me know as soon as he had three votes I would be fired for not supporting him during his trial. Supporting him would have equated to me perjuring myself. Instead, I upheld ICMA's ethical standards for managers, and as a result I was terminated.

I was in my third position for the next 15 years, and toward the end I simply felt that I had accomplished all I could in a community of that size. I decided to move on and took the opportunity to serve a larger community as their first-ever town manager. Nearly a decade later, I left that position because again I had a single board member that became too difficult to work with, and an opportunity opened in the community where I currently work. In this community, I am planning to stay until the ultimate career change — retirement.

It's essential to carefully evaluate these factors and consider whether they are temporary challenges or persistent issues. Sometimes addressing concerns with your elected officials can be difficult conversations to have, but can lead to long-term improvements in job satisfaction, which in turn can lead to positive improvements for the community. But, if changes cannot be made to address concerns and specific situations, then ultimately, the decision to leave a job should align with your long-term career goals and personal well-being.

JAMES MALLOY, ICMA-CM, is town manager of Lexington, Massachusetts and served as the 2020–2021 ICMA president.

10 Points of Change During Transition; or, Can Someone Throw Me a Rope In This Quicksand?

Michael Roberto

All managers go through transition in some way. How does the phrase go: Nothing changes like change itself? Whether in our personal or professional lives, change is one of the few constants. In my particular case, as I went through transition from a city management position, the past seven months have been among the most enjoyable, introspective, and defining times in my life. I would not have traded them for anything.

Actually, I have been in local government management for the past 18 years, 12 as a city manager in two cities. Beginning in January 2000, I "transitioned" into the private sector to work for a first-class consulting engineering firm. I chose the firm because of its commitment to quality, the wonderful people who work for it, and their strong sense of ethics, which places a high value on the firm's clients. I was a finalist in four cities and a county and also was considering two other private sector offers when I chose to work for the firm.

My Own Story

I began my transition from local government in late July 2000. It was odd because, during my career, I have hired 10 managers who were in transition and never expected to be

one myself. Call it ego or naivety, but you always assume it will be someone else who is between jobs. I hired these managers because I believed it was an obligation in this profession to help out our fellow managers. If you can't be supportive and compassionate to a fellow government professional, then what do you stand for, and where are your ethics and values? Everyone gets into the barrel, and at what point do you help or hinder?

When I left, I received more than 200 phone calls, e-mails, and letters from citizens, fellow managers, and people I had never met. They were so incredibly supportive that it made me realize the value of what we do as managers. In a short period of time, I became convinced that I needed to make this opportunity something special. I began to see this experience as a chance to strengthen my core values, and I started to embrace this change as an important chapter of my life. In retrospect, I came up with 10 points on how to manage transitions in life.

1. Through the transition process, **stay in control**. I am absolutely convinced that at the point when it is time to leave, you are in the greatest position of strength. Exercise it thoroughly to protect your family and your future. Do not negotiate from a position of weakness. Force the issues if you must, but just as in negotiating a union contract, never let them see you sweat.

2. **Begin work early**. When you can read the tea leaves that it might be time to go, start putting your resume and contact list together well in advance. Talk with an attorney and an accountant to develop to both short-term (four to six months) and one-year plans. Eventually, you will use them, and when that happens you will not be operating out of confusion but instead from a plan that has a sound legal, professional, and financial foundation.

Also, hire a resume company to help prepare your curriculum vitae (c.v.). I have found that managers write the worst resumes, but this task must be

If you can't be supportive and compassionate to a fellow government professional, then what do you stand for, and where are your ethics and values?

done before you leave. Go back and have your staff summarize all of your accomplishments over the past few years. I always did this each year and kept the correspondences. If you have not done this, you will need your staff to remember key improvements and accomplishments, and it is easier to do this while you are still in your position. I wrote both a public and a private resume so that my options were open.

3. Once you leave, **get out of town**, and take time off. My family and I left for a three-week vacation to Minnesota, and it was a cleansing process. Getting away was an opportunity to read, relax, and think without interruption. Speaking of reading, two books I recommend are *Running to the Mountain* by Jon Katz and, for the guys, *Men's Passages* by Gail Sheehy.

Both books are not so much about change as about how a person deals with it. This, I came to find, was my single most important learning experience. You must embrace change. Do not run from it, rationalize it away, or imagine demons in it. Change is going to happen every day of our lives—how we confront and control it is what really matters.

4. **Get in physical, mental, and spiritual shape**. I know you have heard this before, but in my eyes it made

all the difference. I hired a personal trainer and started lifting weights, working out, and reducing my body fat, which resulted in losing three inches from my waist and gaining energy. Another great support was seeing a therapist, who helped me work through some personal issues and put thoughts in their proper context. Most managers have negotiated health insurance as an employee benefit, and most plans will cover this valuable service.

But, most important, I reconnected with my religious beliefs. I learned that as my relationship with my beliefs grew stronger, I developed a far greater understanding of myself. I credit this fact more than anything else with bringing value to my life during this period of transition.

5. **Rediscover your family**. I could not remember a time when I was at home when my daughter left for school or there when she got back. We started taking tennis lessons together. I coached her soccer team and drove her to places that I didn't even know she went. As well as your children, remember that person who sleeps next to you in bed. Take this time to strengthen and bring your relationship with your partner to a new level, and realize that all of this crisis will pass, but family stays constant.

6. Get rid of debt, and **create a solid financial plan**. I always had paid attention to long-term retirement goals, but it's easy to get caught in short-term debt. Eliminate all of it ahead of time, well before you ever leave a job, so that when all of the other issues hit, this is one giant burden that has been lifted.

7. **Take your time**. Develop a plan, and explore both public and private options. I worked on focusing on my ideal job. Since I had almost one year of severance pay, this cushion helped give me the chance to think through what I wanted to do. But, more important, it helped get my priorities in order. I was able to negotiate the city into paying for an out-

placement firm that helped me with transition to another sector. Look closely into this option. I found it incredibly useful, especially when I was researching the private sector. Remember, it is your choice to make.

Consider each option carefully, making every step correspond to the plan and priorities you have established. Transition is work! Set up an office with what works for you. For example, I installed a cable Internet connection because I was used to a T1 line. As part of your severance package, include your cellphone (a lot of people remember the number), your computer (avoids fighting over the home computer), a fax/printer (the entire world is not Internet-ready), and a Palm Pilot. If you have operated with these in your government job, technology will be equally important as you look for a new job.

8. It is important to **be open to the kindness of others**. As managers, we are so used to giving orders and being in control. Then, suddenly, all of that power disappears. It hurts, and it's easy to want to hide. But what you'll discover is that there are incredibly compassionate people in this world who will appear in your life, sometimes when you least expect it. Work at being receptive to them. Realize that each contact is an opportunity that opens another door, either within you or for a future job. So many people were incredibly supportive to me, and I shall never forget how their support helped me.

9. **Continue to believe in yourself**. It is easy to get "down" on yourself and to doubt things. For me, faith in myself, my family, and my religion has never wavered, and my beliefs have only strengthened with time. Don Stillwell, manager of Lee County, Florida, put it correctly at a recent conference where I was a speaker: "This is a job, not a life." It's easy to confuse the two.

10. Realize that **change and transition are just another opportunity to succeed**. You cannot dwell on the

past, but you can grab the future and take it where you want it. At the moment when it least appears that you are in control of your life, you are in the greatest control of it. I subscribe to an e-mail service called Daily Motivator (www.great-day.com), which sends me words of encouragement and strength each day. As I went back and looked at old messages, I came upon these thoughts, which make a perfect ending for my story: "What was once an effort becomes a joy when you decide you want to do it, when it fits your purpose, when it makes a positive difference. A great strategy for getting yourself to take effective action is to connect that action solidly with the things you truly desire." **PM**

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SEVERANCE AGREEMENT

THIS AGREEMENT made this _____ day of _____ by and between _____ an adult individual who resides at _____ hereinafter referred to as _____

AND

_____ political subdivision, hereinafter referred to as "City".

WITNESSETH THAT:

WHEREAS, _____ has been the City Manager and Chief Administrative Officer City for a period of in excess of _____ years, having commenced employment on _____; and

WHEREAS, _____ shall voluntarily terminate his/her employment with the City, and

WHEREAS, both _____ and the City are desirous of affecting a Severance Agreement relative to the compensation and benefits to be paid to _____ by the City, and

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the above and intending to be legally bound hereby, the

parties hereto agree as follows:

1. _____ shall voluntarily resign from his/her position as City Manager of the City by announcing his/her resignation not later than the _____ day of _____.

2. _____ shall be entitled to six (6) months severance pay at his/her current rate of pay, \$ _____ per month, calculated from the effective date of his/her resignation. He/she shall receive a lump sum payment of this severance pay within five (5) working days from his/her last date of employment with the City.

3. In addition to \$ _____ severance pay set forth in Paragraph 2, he/she shall be entitled to accumulated sick days, vacation days and a personal day through _____, which are _____ sick days, _____ vacation days, and _____ personal day. These accumulated sick, vacation and personal days are consistent with existing personnel policy; he/she _____ shall receive a lump sum payment calculated on a per diem basis for these unused days to be added into his/her severance payment. The per diem rate shall be \$ _____.

4. In addition, the City shall provide health and dental benefits under his/her current medical coverage for a minimum of six (6) months subsequent to his/her termination of employment and a maximum of _____ months. If at any time after his/her employment with the City ceases, he/she becomes re-employed or in any other way is covered by health and dental

benefits, the City's obligation to continue health and dental benefits after months shall end.

5. The City shall continue to pay _____ vision and life insurance/disability insurance through _____.

6. In addition, the City shall pay as additional consideration, the monthly Pension benefit to the I.C.M.A. Retirement Corporation, at the current monthly rate, for six (6) months, which is _____(percent) of his/her gross severance pay.

7. To the extent permitted by law, this Agreement shall be kept confidential by the parties. Council shall refrain from any negative public comment regarding his/her tenure with the City that would negatively affect his/her opportunities of employment.

8. The City shall provide _____ with a favorable recommendation for employment acknowledging his/her excellent performance of all duties to all future prospective employers. The parties agree that _____ resignation is a result of differing philosophies in management taken by the recently elected Members of Council.

9. The president of council will promptly provide _____ with a letter of recommendation to any prospective employer and allow _____ to submit a draft of the proposed letter of recommendation to be mutually agreeable to both parties and the City shall not unreasonably withhold their approval of the letter of recommendation.

10. Following his/her voluntarily termination of employment with the City, the City will not contest his/her application for Unemployment Compensation to the extent that it is permitted by law.

11. In the event that there are any legal or administrative issues, allegations, or hearings that require _____ participation because of his/her tenure as City Manager, _____ agrees to cooperate and provide information and testimony to the extent deemed necessary by the City. In exchange, the City agrees to pay for these consulting services at the rate of \$ _____ per hour. In the event _____ is made a party to any legal or administrative proceeding as a result of his/her tenure as City Manager or because of decisions made that were within the scope of his/her employment and authority as City Manager, the City will provide a legal defense on his/ her behalf. It is understood that the City is not obligated to provide such defense for any matters outside the scope of his/her employment or authority, whether they be intentional, negligent or criminal.

12. _____ shall be entitled to copies of any non-confidential documents, which constitute his/her personal work product that may assist his/her in securing employment, provided such documents are approved by the City Attorney in advance. The City shall provide said documents to _____ within five (5) working days.

13. In consideration for the severance payments made in this agreement, hereby unconditionally and generally releases _____ and its Officers, Council members and

employees from all actions, causes of actions, claims and demands of any nature, whether known or unknown, that he/she has or may have against them or any of them up to and including the date of this Agreement, including without limitation any and all claims relating directly or indirectly to _____ employment by _____ including but not limited to claims, whether Federal or State, statutory, common law or otherwise, for breach of contract, any tortuous activity by _____ or its Officers, Councilmen or employees, defamation, fraud, misrepresentation and unlawful discrimination.

14. _____ certifies that he/she has (a) has read the terms of this Agreement, (b) understands that it contains release and waiver of any claims he/she has or may have against _____ and related persons and entities, (c) has been advised to consult with an attorney concerning it, (d) has had an opportunity to discuss it with an attorney, _____, and (e) understands its terms and effects.

16. _____ acknowledges that he/she executes this Agreement with its general release of his/her own volition, with a full understanding of its terms and effects and in exchange for the consideration that is described in this Agreement and that he/she acknowledges as adequate and satisfactory to him/ her.

17. This Agreement will not be construed as an admission of any liability by or any other agent or employees of _____, or as an admission of any violation of any federal, state, or local statute, regulation or ordinance.

18. This Agreement may not be modified or altered except by a subsequent writing to be signed by all parties to this Agreement.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

Exhibit I:
Sample Employment Agreements

The following are links to sample employment agreements.

Link to ICMA Model Employment Agreement

<https://icma.org/documents/icma-model-employment-agreement-editable>

This document serves as a model employment agreement template for administrators of municipal governments. The document is available to the ICMA members.

Texas City Management Association CM Agreement:

<https://www.tcma.org/DocumentCenter/View/156/Sample-Employment-Agreement-with-Benefit-Options-PDF>

This agreement is available to the public.

Agreements specific to Florida may be found online from various cities and counties by doing a web search for either *Florida city manager employment agreements* or *Florida county administrator employment agreements*.

Note:

20-Week Limit on Severance Pay in Florida: All agreements after July 1, 2011, must comply with Florida Statute Section 215.425 (4)(a)(1)&(2) as follows:

(4)(a) On or after July 1, 2011, a unit of government that enters into a contract or employment agreement, or renewal or renegotiation of an existing contract or employment agreement, that contains a provision for severance pay with an officer, agent, employee, or contractor must include the following provisions in the contract:

1. A requirement that severance pay provided may not exceed an amount greater than 20 weeks of compensation.
2. A prohibition of provision of severance pay when the officer, agent, employee, or contractor has been fired for misconduct, as defined in s. [443.036\(29\)](#), by the unit of government.

On the next page please see a sample Florida Manager Employment Agreement based on a 2023 City Manager search.

SAMPLE FLORIDA EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT

This EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT (“Agreement”) is entered into, by, and between the City/ County of _____ and _____ (“Manager”).

WHEREAS, after due consideration and deliberation in accord with law, the Commission (hereafter Commission) of the _____ has determined to offer the position of City/ County Manager to _____; and

WHEREAS, Manager has determined to accept the position; and

WHEREAS, the Parties wish to set forth the terms and conditions of Manager's employment by the City/County.

NOW, THEREFORE, intending to be legally bound, the Parties agree as follows.

1. Recitals. The Parties agree that the recitals above are true and correct and that they are incorporated by reference as if fully stated here.
2. Employment. The City/ County agrees to employ, and Manager agrees to be employed in the position of City/ County Manager on the terms and conditions herein stated and as set forth in the Charter of the City/ County of _____ and the Code of Ordinances of the City/ County of _____.
3. Duties. Manager will perform the functions and duties of City/ County Manager as specified in Section _____ of the City/ County Charter and City/ County Code of Ordinances, as they may be amended from time to time, and by all other applicable laws, and to perform other legally permissible and proper duties as the Commission shall from time-to-time assign. The Manager shall give his/ her best efforts in performing these duties.
4. Term. The Term of the Employment Agreement shall be for an indefinite term subject to the termination provisions set forth herein. This Agreement and Manager's employment hereunder shall commence on _____.
5. Base Salary. The annual base salary of the Manager shall be \$_____. The base salary shall not be decreased during the term of this Agreement. The City/ County agrees to review said base salary and/ or benefits on an annual basis and to increase said salary and benefits to such an extent as the Commission may determine appropriate per the Manager's Performance Evaluation Process. At a minimum, the annual base salary shall be increased by any cost-of-living adjustment, or other increases provided to non- represented employees.

6. Performance Evaluation Process. An initial "check-in" evaluation will be undertaken six months following the Manager's appointment. A subsequent comprehensive performance evaluation will take place six months thereafter (i.e., at the end of the Manager's initial year of employment). Upon attainment of a successful annual performance evaluation, as determined by the Commission, Manager shall be eligible for a base salary adjustment. Thereafter, performance evaluations will occur on an annual basis with any base salary adjustment to be dependent upon the results of the evaluation and consistent with approved Annual Budget appropriations. The Commission shall evaluate/review the performance of the Manager in a public meeting, subject to a process, form, criteria, and format which shall be mutually agreed upon by the Manager and the Commission. The Commission shall provide the Manager with a written summary stating the findings of the Commission and provide an adequate opportunity for the Manager to discuss their evaluation with the Commission.

7. Termination.

a. Employment may be terminated with or without cause by the City/ County or Manager, in accordance with the procedures provided herein. If the City/ County chooses to terminate the Manager, the Commission must approve terminating the Manager in accordance with procedures set forth in Section ____ of the City/ County Charter and Code of Ordinances, as they may be amended from time to time.

b. If Manager is unable to perform their duties for any reason, including but not limited to sickness, accident, injury, or mental incapacity, for a period of four (4) successive weeks beyond any accrued sick leave, the City/ County shall have the option to terminate Manager's employment, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the City/ County Charter and Code of Ordinances, as they may be amended from time to time and in accord with applicable law,

c. If the Agreement is terminated by the death of the Manager, the City/ County shall pay a designated beneficiary of the Manager, or his/ her estate, all accrued compensation due Manager as of the date of his/ her death. The City/ County shall have no other liability to the Manager, his/ her estate, heirs, or beneficiaries, and neither the Manager beneficiary nor estate will be entitled to any severance pay.

d. If the City/County, citizens or State of Florida acts to amend any provisions of the City/ County Charter, Code of Ordinances, as they may be amended from time to time, and/or state law pertaining to the role, powers, duties, authority, responsibilities of the Manager's position that substantially changes the form of government, the Manager shall have the right to declare that such amendments constitute termination from the effective date of such amendments. Termination pursuant to this section 7(d) shall constitute a termination without cause for purposes of entitlement to severance benefits under section 8 (b).

e. Termination shall occur when the City/ County breaches a material provision of the Employment Agreement and fails, within thirty (30) days after written notice has been given by the Manager to the Commission to comply with any provision of this Agreement.

f. The Agreement shall not be construed to create anything other than a terminable at will employment relationship between City/ County and Manager. The Manager may terminate with the City/ County by directing written notice of termination to the City/ County by certified or registered mail, returned receipt requested or by filing with the City/ County Clerk with a copy to the Mayor/ Commission Chair. In the event of such termination, Employee shall not be entitled to receive the severance pay provided for in the Employment Agreement.

8. Severance.

a. The Employment Agreement shall immediately terminate, and Manager shall not be entitled to the severance benefits if the Manager is convicted, pleads no contest to, or receives a withhold of adjudication for a felony or crime involving moral turpitude or dishonesty, or if he/she acts with gross misfeasance or malfeasance or otherwise is guilty of gross misconduct which constitutes conduct demonstrating willful or wanton disregard of the City's/County's interests, a deliberate violation or disregard of the standards of behavior to which the City/ County has a right to expect of Manager, carelessness or negligence to a degree or recurrence that manifests culpability, wrongful intent, or evil design, or shows an intentional and substantial disregard of the City's/ County's interests or of Manager's duties and obligations to the City/County, including but not limited to conduct resulting in material harm to the City/County, willful neglect or failure to perform his or her duties, gross insubordination, misconduct, as defined in section 443.036(29), Florida Statutes, as it may be amended from time to time, or acts of dishonesty. For termination due to the reasons stated pursuant to this section/provision of the Employment Agreement, the Manager is only entitled to compensation for hours actually worked up to the termination date and compensation for accrued vacation time.

b. Pursuant to the provisions of the City/ County Charter, the City/ County may by majority vote of the Commission with or without cause remove the Manager from office in accordance with Section _____ of the City/ County Charter. If the Manager is terminated without cause, as defined in Section 215.425 (4)(a) 1 Florida Statutes, he/ she shall receive twenty (20) weeks of pay equal to his then-current salary and earned and unused vacation, and retirement benefits. During the severance period, Manager will also continue to be enrolled in his City's/ County's Health Insurance Plan with Employer and Employee contributions unchanged. If the Manager resigns or is terminated with cause for misconduct, as defined in Section 443 036(30) Florida Statutes, the City/ County shall not be obligated to pay severance and related benefits.

c. If the Employment Agreement is terminated by City/ County and the Manager is entitled to severance benefits, Manager must execute a general and full release releasing the City/County, its officials, officers, employees, attorneys, and agents from any and all obligations, claims or liabilities

arising out of Manager's employment with the City/County, including but not limited to claims for wrongful termination, discrimination of any kind and defamation. If the Manager refuses to execute said release, the City/ County may seek specific performance of the Employment Agreement and injunctive relief requiring the Employee to sign said release, amongst its available remedies. Said release shall not release the City/ County from its obligations to indemnify the Manager under the Indemnification & Bonding section of the Employment Agreement.

9. Resignation. In the event the Manager voluntarily resigns his/ her position, he/ she shall give thirty (30) days advance written notice of his/ her resignation, unless the parties otherwise agree, in writing. If the Manager voluntarily resigns, he/ she shall be entitled only to his/ her accrued vacation leave and no other benefits as provided pursuant to the Severance provision of the Employment Agreement.

10. Retirement, Deferred Compensation.

a. The City/ County agrees to execute all necessary agreements for the Manager's participation in the 401(a) retirement plan for Executive Management employees and the 457 Deferred Compensation Plan. In addition to the Manager's base salary paid by the City/ County to the Manager, the City/ County agrees to pay, on behalf of the Manager, an amount equal to, but not less than, a total of ___ percent (___%) of Manager's base salary into the 401(a) retirement plan, in equal proportionate amounts each pay period. The Manager shall be required to contribute ___ percent (___%) of the Manager's current base salary annually on a pre-tax basis as a condition of participation. The City/ County shall disclose to the Manager the financial impact of any amendment to the terms of the Manager's retirement benefits.

The City/ County agrees to execute all necessary agreements for the Manager's participation in the City's/ County's 401(a) plan to reflect the following vesting schedule (for the City's portion of contributions) is as follows:

i. After completion of the 1st year of employment: ___%

ii. After completion of the 2nd year of employment: ___%

c. The City/ County has also adopted a qualified 457 defined contribution plan to which the Manager may voluntarily contribute on a pre-tax basis, subject to maximum contribution limits established by the Internal Revenue System.

d. It is noted that the City/ County also participates in the Federal Social Security System with associated Employee and Employer required contributions

11. Insurance & Benefits:

a. The City/ County shall provide full major-medical insurance and other benefits and coverage for the Manager and dependents at the same options and costs as provided for other City/ County non-

represented employees. Coverage will commence on the 1st of the month following the Manager's initial thirty (30) days of employment.

b. The City/ County shall provide the Manager with life insurance as provided other City/ County non- represented Employees. The life insurance policy premium shall be paid 100% by the City/ County with insured amount equal to one time (1X) the Manager's base salary, rounded up to the nearest \$500.00, up to a maximum policy limit of \$_____.

c. The City/ County shall provide the Manager with all other benefits as provided to other non-represented Employees.

d. The Manager shall receive \$_____ per pay period (\$_____ annually) as Personal Insurance Credit (PIC) to be used towards the purchase of Manager's selected City/County-provided health insurance plan. Said amount shall be adjusted upward to be consistent with any increases approved for non-represented employees.

12. Vacation and Sick Leave.

a. The Manager shall be provided with vacation leave in accordance with the policies applicable to all City/ County employees and shall be credited with _____ weeks of front-loaded vacation pay upon commencement of employment. The Manager shall also accrue vacation leave at the rate of _____ hours per pay period (equates to _____ weeks annually) commencing on his/ her first date of employment for his/ her first year of employment. Following the completion of the Manager's initial year of employment, he/ she shall accrue vacation leave at the rate of _____ hours per pay period (equates to _____ weeks annually). Upon termination, whether voluntary or involuntary, Manager shall be entitled to compensation for all accumulated and unused vacation leave.

b. Per City/ County Personnel Policy, Manager's vacation pay accrual is subject to a maximum of _____ hours. After five years of employment with the City/County, Manager may convert/cash out up to _____ hours of vacation pay one time per fiscal year, provided they have taken at least _____ hours in the previous 12 months.

c. The Manager shall be provided with sick leave as provided for other non-represented City/ County Employees, accrued at _____ hours per pay period. (_____ hours per year). Per City/ County Personnel Policy, there is a cap of _____ hours on sick leave.

d. Upon termination, whether voluntary or involuntary, the City/ County shall compensate the Manager for all accrued vacation leave. Said compensation shall be based upon the Employee' s salary as of the date of employment termination.

e. Holidays are established in the City's/ County's Personnel Policy Manual. As of the date of this Agreement, there are _____ designated holidays plus birthday/ floating holiday.

13. Other Terms and Conditions of Employment:

a. The Commission shall fix any other terms and conditions of employment, as it may determine, from time to time, relating to the performance of Manager, provided such terms and conditions are not inconsistent with or in conflict with the provisions of the Employment Agreement, the City/ County Charter, the Code of Ordinances, as they may be amended from time to time, or any other applicable law.

b. All benefits, regulations, and rules of the City/ County as they now exist or hereafter may be amended, that apply to non-represented City/ County employees shall also apply to Manager, unless the Employment Agreement specifically provides to the contrary.

c. It is recognized that the Manager must devote a great deal of time outside normal office hours to business for the City/County, and to that end Manager shall be allowed to establish an appropriate work schedule.

d. The employment provided for by this Agreement shall be the Employee's sole employment. Recognizing that certain outside consulting or teaching opportunities provide indirect benefits to the City/ County and the community, the Manager may elect to accept limited teaching, consulting, or other business opportunities with prior approval of the Commission with the understanding that such arrangements shall not constitute interference with nor a conflict of interest with his responsibilities under the Employment Agreement.

e. Vehicle Allowance. Manager to receive \$_____ per month for expenses, including maintenance, repairs, gasoline, and insurance associated with his use of his/ her own vehicle within the City/ County (and, in lieu of mileage expenses, within the State of Florida). Manager shall maintain his/ her own vehicle insurance in an amount not less than \$_____ dollars per claim, and \$_____ dollars per incident. Said insurance shall be with a company acceptable to the City/ County and shall not be construed or constitute a waiver to the City's/ County's sovereign immunity protection.

f. Cell Phone. Manager will be issued a cell phone with phone and data plan fully paid by the City/ County for the Manager's use for City/ County business.

14. Housing Relocation. Pursuant to the City/ County Charter, the Manager need not be a resident of the City/ County or state at the time of appointment but shall reside in the City/ County while in office. It is understood that the Manager will be initially moving to _____ individually, with his/ her family relocating later to allow his/ her children to complete their academic year in their present schools. Manager will have three (3) months to find housing within the corporate boundaries of _____ and shall thereafter maintain his/ her legal domicile within the corporate boundaries of _____ throughout his tenure. The City/ County will provide the Manager a one-time payment for the cost of the Manager's relocation of his household within the City's/ County's corporate limits within twelve (12 months) of appointment. Manager to secure quotes from moving companies to determine a

reasonable lump sum amount (to be determined closer to the move date) which will be provided to the Manager to use for relocation purposes.

15. Travel Expenses. The City/ County will provide the Manager a one-time payment for travel expenses in the amount of \$_____.

16. Dues & Subscriptions.

a. The City/ County agrees to budget and to pay for professional dues and subscriptions of the Manager necessary for his continuation and full participation in national, regional, state, and local associations and organizations necessary and desirable for his continued professional participation, growth, and advancement and for the good of the City/County. Manager must become and remain a continuous member in good standing with both the International City/ County Management Association (ICMA) and the Florida City/ County Management Association (FCCMA) throughout his tenure with the City/County.

b. The City/ County recognizes the desirability of representation in and before local civic and other organizations and agrees to budget and to pay for the Manager's membership in such civic clubs and organizations as City/ County deems necessary and desirable.

17. Professional Development. The City/ County hereby agrees to budget for and to pay the travel and subsistence expenses of the Employee for professional and official travel, meetings, and occasions adequate to continue the professional development of the Employee and to adequately pursue necessary official and other functions for the City/County, including but not limited to the annual conference of the Florida City and County Management Association (FCCMA), the International City/ County Management Association (ICMA), and such other national, regional, state and local government groups and committee of which the Manager is a member. The City/ County also agrees to budget and to pay for the Manager's travel and subsistence expenses for short courses, institutes and seminars that are necessary for his/ her professional development and for the good of the City/County.

18. Ethical Commitments. Manager shall not engage in any conduct which could reflect unfavorably upon the City/County, Manager will at all times uphold the ethics rules, regulations, and laws of the State of Florida. Manager must comply with all lawful Commission directives; state, local, and federal laws; and the City's/ County's policies, rules, ordinances; and City/ County Charter. Failure to comply with ethical commitments shall constitute cause for termination with cause.

19. Indemnification, Bonding.

a. The City/ County shall furnish and provide the Manager with insurance protection including comprehensive general liability and errors and omissions coverage applicable to all acts or omission of the Employee arising out of his employment, and will defend, save harmless, and indemnify the Employee against any tort, professional liability claim or demand, or other legal action arising out of an

alleged act or omission occurring in their performance of the Employee's duties, excluding Illegal or criminal acts, except as/otherwise expressly stated herein.

b. City/ County shall defend, save harmless, and indemnify Manager against any tort, professional liability claim or demand, or other legal or administrative, action, whether groundless or otherwise, arising out of an alleged act or omission occurring at any time during the performance of Manager's duties as City/ County Manager unless it is determined that the Manager acted in bad faith or with malicious purpose or in a manner exhibiting wanton and willful disregard of human rights, safety, or property. The City/ County shall pay the expenses for the travel, lodging meals, and lost time of the Manager should the Manager be subject to such claim, demand, or action, and the same be pending after the Manager is no longer in the employment of the City/County.

c. The City/ County shall be responsible and have authority to compromise and settle any such clam or suit and pay the amount of any defense, settlement, or judgement rendered thereon. The Manager shall cooperate fully with the City/ County in the settlement, compromise, or trial of any such claim. The provisions of any City/ County policy or ordinance regarding the indemnification of the City's/ County's officials or employees shall apply to the indemnification of the) Manager to the extent the policy or ordinance does not conflict with the appropriate indemnification section of the Employment Agreement.

Agreed to on (Date _____, 202_).

Manager

City/ County of _____

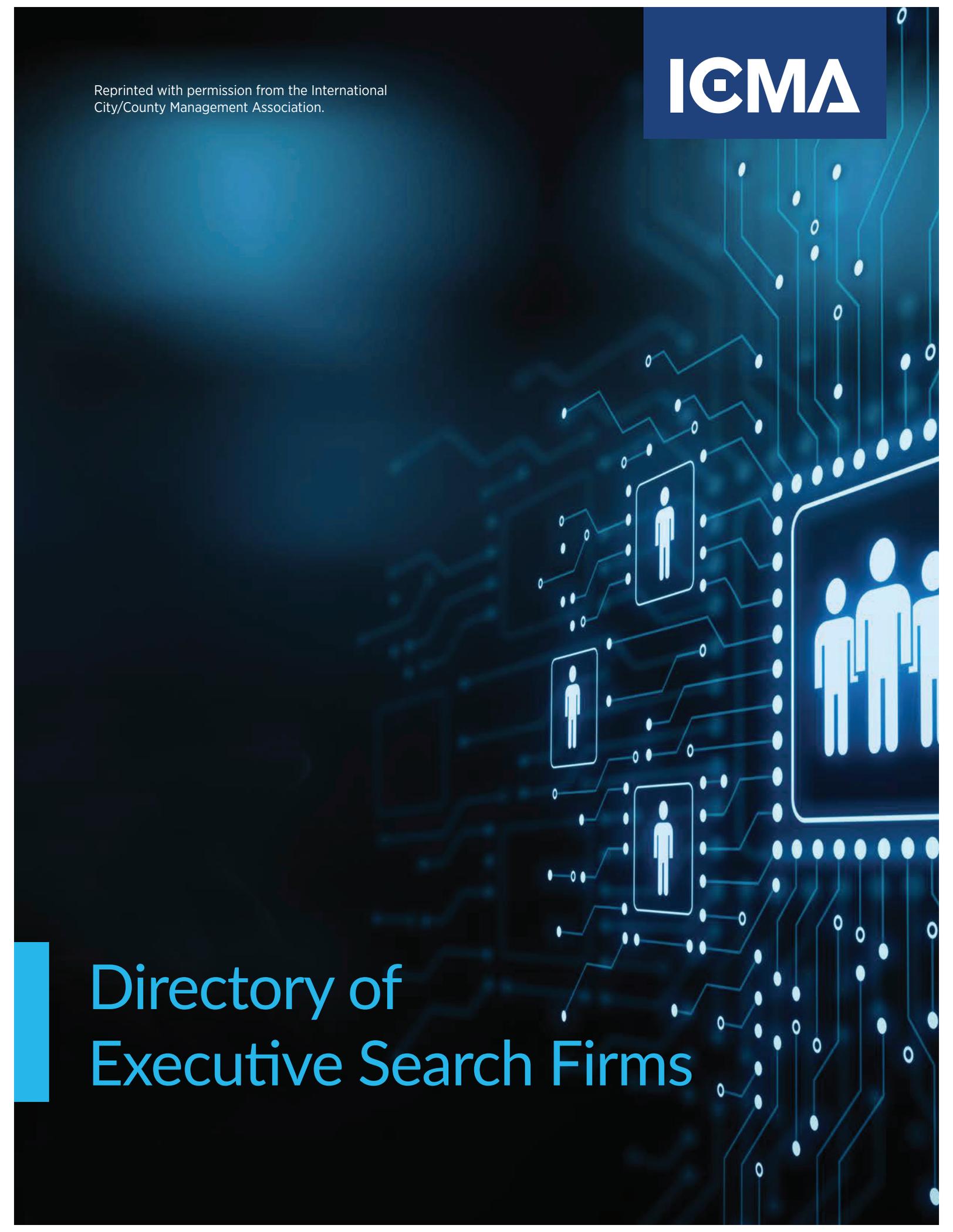
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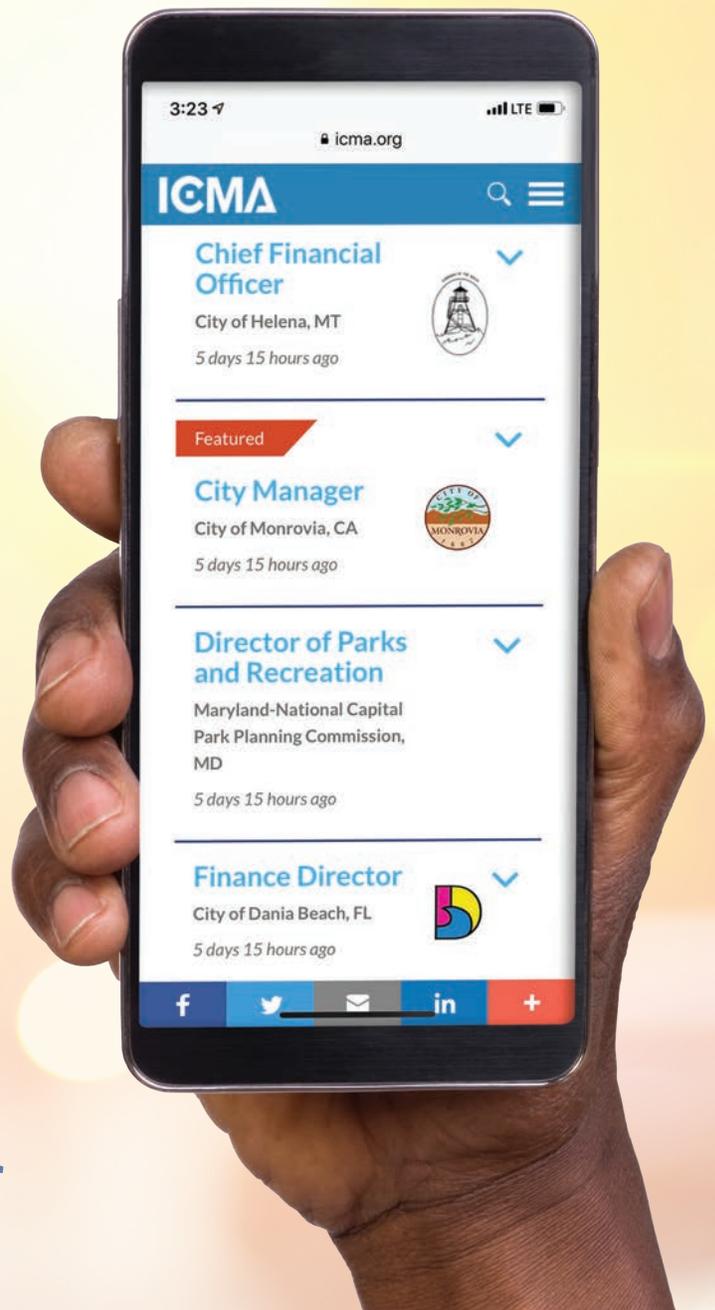
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— Tansy Hayward
Assistant city manager, Raleigh, NC

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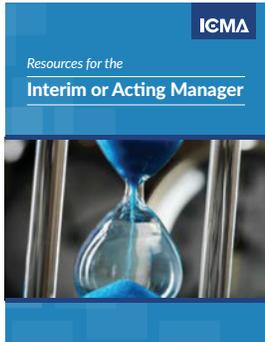


— Lee R. Feldman
Former ICMA president

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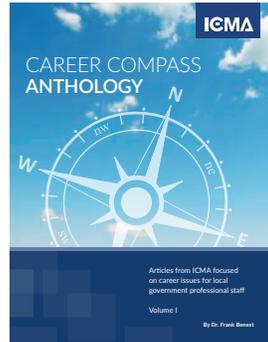
ICMA CAREER GUIDES

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Acting Manager's Handbook is a guidebook to help the acting manager make the most of a sometimes-unexpected opportunity. (Member Resource)

[icma.org/actingmgr](https://www.icma.org/actingmgr)



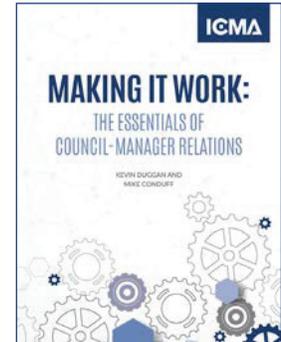
Career Compass is a monthly column from ICMA focused on career issues for local government professional staff that appears in the ICMA Newsletter and online.

[icma.org/careercompass](https://www.icma.org/careercompass)



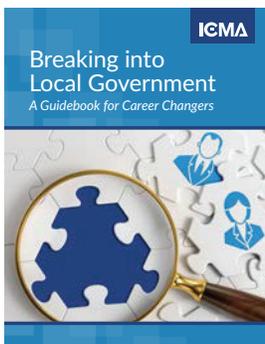
First-Time Administrator's Handbook covers items that should be considered before an interview, during an interview, before accepting a position, and before starting a new position. (Member Resource)

[icma.org/newmanager](https://www.icma.org/newmanager)



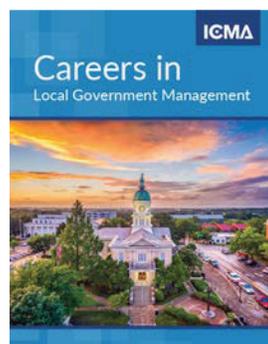
Making It Work: The Essentials of Council-Manager Relations provides the competencies needed to build a relationship that is based on mutual respect, understanding of roles, and open communication.

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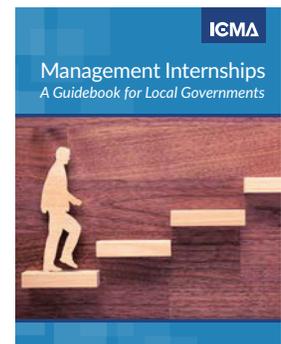
Careers in Local Government Management is an introduction to local government as a career, what city/town/county management is, what managers do, and tips on education, skills, and job opportunities related to the profession.

[icma.org/careersinlg](https://www.icma.org/careersinlg)



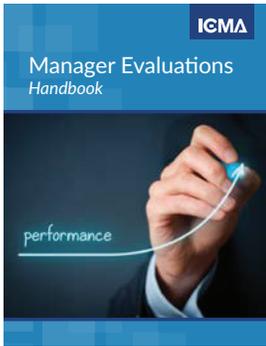
Job Hunting Handbook is a resource that covers topics ranging from mapping out your job search to negotiating compensation. (Member Resource)

[icma.org/jobhandbook](https://www.icma.org/jobhandbook)



Management Internships: A Guidebook for Local Governments helps local government managers and MPA programs work together to create meaningful internship experiences.

[icma.org/internships](https://www.icma.org/internships)



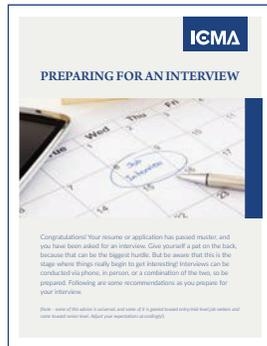
Manager Evaluations Handbook is a template for new or tenured managers to help elected officials design an effective evaluation tool.
(Member Resource)

icma.org/evaluation



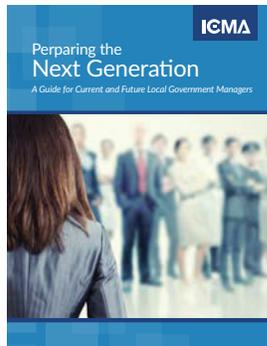
Model Employment Agreement is a template for municipal government administrators to use in crafting terms of hiring and employment.
(Member Resource)

icma.org/employmentagreement



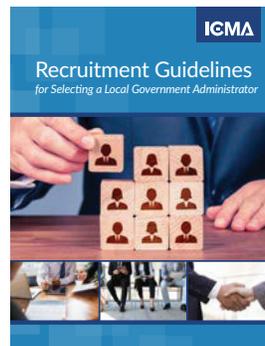
Preparing for an Interview offers helpful hints once you've passed the resume screening and have been called in for a discussion.

icma.org/interviewguide



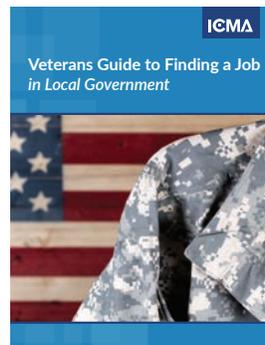
Preparing the Next Generation Case Studies highlights programs being used by local governments that believe it is their responsibility to mentor young and mid-career professionals.
(Member Resource)

icma.org/nextgencases



Recruitment Guidelines for Selecting a Local Government Administrator presents guidelines to help local governments and executive search firms conduct a successful recruitment for a local government administrator/chief administrative officer.

icma.org/recruitmentguidelines



Veterans Guide to Finding a Job in Local Government offers tips and tactics to help veterans get the job they want in local government.

icma.org/veterans-jobs-guide

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- Questions about the ICMA Management Fellowship: lgmfprogram@icma.org
- Questions about ICMA Coaching: coaching@icma.org

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Veterans' Local Government Management Fellowship

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The VLGMF is a Department of Defense approved SkillBridge Program for exiting service members pursuing careers in local government management.

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A photograph of three business professionals walking along a modern glass-walled building. On the left, a man in a dark suit and red tie carries a briefcase. In the center, an older man in a dark suit and blue tie gestures with his hand. On the right, a woman in a dark dress and blazer carries a white bag and a coffee cup. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting daytime.

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