

News and Updates



May 29, 2026

President's Message

When FCCMA staff gently reminded me to finish these remarks, the deadline coincided with the ICMA Local Government Re-imagined Conference in Philadelphia. The topic this year? *Democracy and the Public Trust*. And so, on the eve of our nation's 250th anniversary, I found myself in Philadelphia—the very cradle of our founding—thinking about each of you.

Last year, we talked about our camera rolls. We talked about how city leaders view the world through a slightly unusual lens. We discussed Florida's role in the world economy, and how we must reach beyond our state borders for ideas, solutions, and best practices. And finally, we talked about joy—the importance of serving, despite our challenges, with a heart full of joy.

This past year at FCCMA has been a stable and successful one. We remain fiscally strong with a vibrant membership base. We continued our robust slate of professional development, bringing in expert speakers from within and outside Florida for our monthly webinars, and keynote speakers from Texas and New Mexico to this very conference. We reached our 218th podcast episode. We refined and improved the function of our Ethics Policy. We hosted the largest-ever ICMA



International Conference in Tampa. And, with every trip to Tallahassee, we spoke truth to power—clearly demonstrating that our budgets are transparent, balanced, and precisely tailored to the residents who chose them.

Reflecting on all of this, I was reminded of "The Science of 'Muddling Through,'" Charles Lindblom's landmark 1959 paper on how administrators make decisions in the face of deep uncertainty. We use what we have. We draw from experience, weigh the choices available to us in the moment, and navigate the context of the situation to put one foot in front of the other. We muddle through.

So, there I was in Philadelphia, out for an early morning walk. At the corner of 4th and Chestnut, I came face-to-face with a grave. It startled me; I wasn't expecting it right there in the middle of the city—a name carved simply into a marble slab: *Benjamin Franklin*.

I've read H.W. Brands' biography of Franklin. I have a solid understanding of his contributions to science, innovation, the fire service, insurance, and the founding of our republic. Yet, I was entirely unprepared for how deeply I would be moved by the words of his contemporaries at the time of his death—words from Washington, Mirabeau, and Turgot. It made me stop and ask: *What is the legacy that each of us will leave behind?*

My friend Chuck Pavlos, a retired Navy Commander, worked in local government for years, serving communities in Cape Coral, Orange Park, and Punta Gorda. We worked together nearly every day for eight years before he retired. After battling bone cancer for several years, he called me. Many others in this room received a similar call that day. He called on the very last day of his life to say, *"I'm done fighting. Thank you, and I love you."*

I had no words in that moment. Overcome by emotion, I fumbled through a response of sorrow and condolences.

Since then, I have often thought about what I *wish* I had said. I should have said: *"You did it, Chuck. You built a magnificent legacy—a dedication to your faith, and a beautiful family of a wife, sons, and grandsons. You served your country with honor. You served your communities well, building infrastructure to improve water and sewer systems and protecting homes and businesses from rising waters. You did it all with generosity and love. You can rest easy knowing you made a difference to so many people. You and your family are surrounded by love."*

So, returning from the City of Brotherly Love, my hope for each of us as we muddle through is that we truly love the work and that we love the people we work with.

Speaking of love for our organization, I want to extend a massive thank you to everyone who volunteered on an FCCMA committee, our Senior Advisors, the FCCMA Board of Directors, and our dedicated FCCMA staff. Please join me in recognizing the incredible work of these groups on behalf of our association.

I'd like to leave you with a quote from 1907 by the famed Chicago architect, Daniel Burnham: "Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men's blood, and probably themselves will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die, but long after we are gone will be a living thing, asserting itself with ever-growing insistency. Remember that our children and grandchildren are going to do things that would stagger us."

Sincerely,

Sarah



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Spotlighting city and county success

The Innovative Equity Project – Budgeting for All

As part of the FY25 budget process, the city of St. Petersburg introduced the Innovative Equity Project (IEP), a new initiative designed to foster community empowerment and participation in resource allocation within the City of St. Petersburg. With a dedicated budget of up to \$1 million, various departments collaborated as teams to fine-tune proposals for projects that prioritize innovation, inclusivity, and equity and align with the Mayor's Pillars for Progress and Governing Principles. Eleven projects were initially submitted by the departments, and during the department line-item review process, Budget and City Administration narrowed the projects down to five top projects.

The five projects were:

- 1) Cover St. Pete – A Roof Replacement Program
- 2) Forward Together – A Youth Crime Prevention Program
- 3) Swim Smart X Library Lockers
- 4) Dream Big Day – A MLK Day of Service
- 5) Water Assistance for St. Petersburg Homeowners (WASH)

In total, 1,211 St. Pete residents voted for their top choice, and the winner was...

Forward Together – A Youth Crime Prevention Program

The goal of the Forward Together Program is to ensure St. Pete's youth have achievable pathways to success and provide a safety net to prevent future crimes. It is a critical initiative designed to address the foundational causes of youth involvement in crime. With a primary focus on youth aged 12-17, this program will emphasize intervention through violence interruption using mental health and human services programs. Funding will support the deployment of social workers to work closely with entire families, facilitating holistic support and guidance, and expanding access to positive activities. The program enhances the current Public Safety Cadet Program through offering cadets (ages 18-21) part-time employment opportunities at the Police Department and fostering leadership and community engagement among young individuals. Together, these efforts aim to create safer communities by empowering our youth and providing them with the necessary support and opportunities for positive growth.

Since appropriating the funds, the Forward Together Program has partnered with multiple organizations to provide positive activities and services. These organizations collectively support at-risk youth (and their families) through care navigation, economic assistance, sports and arts programming, academic tutoring, and support for youth in foster care.

As initial program funding concludes, services for justice-involved youth and their families are being incorporated into the next fiscal year's budget as ongoing, annually funded initiatives to sustain prevention and violence interruption efforts.

Member News and Updates

The following membership applications have been received:

- **Cale Clement**, Territory Manager, The Garland Company, Corporate Member
- **Laura Gambino**, District VII, Trainer, Florida Institute of Government, Affiliate Member
- **Michael Giardino**, District IV, City Manager, City of Stuart, Full Member
- **Merdochey LaFrance**, Director, Government & External Affairs, Tillman Fiber, Corporate Member
- **Melvin Towles**, District VIII, Assistant City Manager, City of Bartow, Full Member
- **David Williams**, Retired Municipal Manager, Life Member
- **Darvin Williams**, District V, City Manager, City of North Miami Beach
- **Makayla Zonfrilli-Lang**, Assistant Municipal Manager & Borough Manager, Municipality of Monroeville & Portage Borough, Affiliate Member

If no current member comes forth with a reason why these applicants should not be approved as members, he/she will be approved for membership.

As part of the FCCMA Professional Management Matters initiative, the City of Oldsmar Mayor, Vice Mayor, Current Council Members, and City Manager were recognized by Pinellas County Assistant County Administrator Matt Spoor for 45 years of the Council-Manager form of government.



Left to Right: City Clerk Kristin Garcia, Council Member Sean Swauger, Council Member Cyndi Olmstead, City Manager Felicia Donnelly, Mayor Katie Gannon, Pinellas County Assistant County Administrator Matt Spoor, Council Member Valerie Tatarzewski, Vice Mayor Steve Graber.

As part of the FCCMA Professional Management Matters initiative, the Town of White Springs Mayor, Vice Mayor, Current Council Members, Town Manager, and staff were recognized by Senior Advisor Jim Hanson for 30 years of the Council-Manager form of government.



Left to Right: Council Member Robert Gamsby, Town Manager Lee Garner, Mayor Tonja Brown, Council Member Gretchen Fouchecourt, Office Manager Cynethia Williams and Vice Mayor Nicole Williams.

From Our Partners



The banner features the FLCityJobs logo at the top center, which includes a magnifying glass icon. Below the logo, the text 'FLORIDA CITY JOBS' is displayed. On the left side, a hand is shown pointing at a smartphone screen that displays the FLCityJobs mobile application interface. The app screen shows a 'Job Seekers' section with a list of job listings, including 'Capital Improvement Project Manager III' and 'Code Compliance Officer'. To the right of the smartphone, the text 'POST OPEN JOBS FOR YOUR CITY' is prominently displayed. Below this, a section titled 'Key Benefits for Your City:' lists three bullet points: 'Post and manage job listings independently', 'Import job details automatically', and 'Track applicant sources with data insights'. At the bottom right, the text 'Visit flcityjobs.com to get started today.' is present.

ICMA Assistant Chief Administrative Officer Exchange

[Application deadline extended!](#)

[Submit your application by June 3, 2026, 12 noon EST.](#)

Are you an ICMA member serving as assistant, deputy, or assistant to the manager and eager to explore the inner workings and best practices of a different local government? The Assistant Chief Administrative Officer (ACAO) Exchange may be the perfect opportunity for you. This preconference event, scheduled for Friday, October 16, 2026, is designed for deputies, assistants, and assistants to the manager seeking inspiration and insights. Members will be paired with staff from the Los Angeles area's host cities, who will provide insights on their best practices and service delivery strategies.

For more information, click [here](#).

ICMA | Coaching Program

[Career Compass No. 123: What I Wish I Could Tell My Manager](#)

Is there a way to communicate how managers can enhance their leadership capacity? Employees are reluctant to tell their bosses how to improve their leadership. Click [here](#) for seven things that emerging leaders aren't telling you.

For more Career Compass Archives, click [here](#).

Remember the MITs

Members-in-Transition (MITs)

Please take a minute to show support for the MITs by emailing or calling the members of your district. A phone call or an email can go a long way to help someone temporarily out of work. You can also help if you have any job opportunities or special projects available for which one of our MITs may be qualified.

With current technology, the project could even be done from the MIT's home. Some of the MITs have provided their resumes and indicated their areas of expertise. The resumes and areas of expertise are now available on the [FCCMA website](#). Also, please keep FCCMA staff informed of any FCCMA members who may be eligible for MIT status. You can email [FCCMA staff](#).

The FCCMA Podcast

Each week, the Florida City and County Management Association releases a podcast featuring a professional in local government. Tune in to discover success stories, leadership insights, innovative local initiatives, and more to keep you informed.

- **Re-Release Episode #182 Hurricane Preparedness and Recovery in Small Cities**
Audra Curts, City Manager of Crystal River
- **Re-Release Episode #158 A Lesson on Ethics**
Suzanne Sherman, Assistant City Manager of Satellite Beach
- **#218 People, Purpose, and Performance in Pasco County**
Mike Carballa, County Administrator of Pasco County
- **#217 Rebuilding Trust and Community After the East Palestine Derailment**
Chad Edwards, Borough Manager of Breckenridge, PA

[Click to Hear the Latest FCCMA Podcasts](#)

Perspectives

Hear local government leaders discuss what initiatives their cities are taking to attract

and retain young talent and skilled workers in local government.



Featured Member



Meet Sean Naughton, Utilities Plan Reviewer, City of Cape Coral

How long have you been an FCCMA member, and why did you join?

I've been an FCCMA member for about two months. I joined at the start of my first semester in the MPA program at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU), when I was beginning to take my career development more seriously. I had already joined ICMA, but once I learned about FCCMA, it felt like a more hands-on and accessible resource for someone early in their career. It seemed like a place where I could actually get involved and learn from people doing the work I hope to do one day.

Are you an ICMA member? Why did you join, and how long have you been a member?

I joined ICMA back in April 2025, before I even knew I'd been accepted into my MPA program. At the time, I just wanted to get a better sense of the profession and start exploring what a career in city management might look like. It felt like a good first step toward understanding the field and building a foundation for the future.

Please describe your areas of formal/advanced education.

I earned my bachelor's degree in Supervision and Management from Florida SouthWestern State College earlier this year. This fall, I completed my first semester in the Master of Public Administration program at Florida Gulf Coast University, and I'm on track to graduate in 2027.

[Read More](#)

Events and Trainings

June 4, 2026

2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

[FCCMA Coaching Webinar](#)

August 6, 2026

2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

[FCCMA Coaching Webinar](#)

Upcoming Webinars

Save the date for future webinar offerings!

June 4, 2026

Municipal Websites and ADA Compliance

July 9, 2026

Rebuilding Trust

August 6, 2026

**The Governance Edge: Strategic Insights for
Municipal Charter Revisions**

September 3, 2026

Requirements from the State

Jobs

Below is a list of active FCCMA job advertisements accessible on our website.

[Click here](#) for details.

ABILENE, TX – City Engineer

NORTH MIAMI BEACH – Executive
Assistant To City Manager

ALACHUA COUNTY – Human Resources Manager
ARCADIA – Public Works Director
CAPE CANAVERAL – Executive Assistant & Government Affairs Coordinator
CHATTAHOOCHEE – City Manager
DEFUNIAK SPRINGS – Finance Director
FORT MYERS – City Attorney
GAINESVILLE – Planning & Development Director
HAINES CITY – City Attorney
HAINES CITY – City Manager
HAINES CITY – CRA Manager
HARDEE COUNTY – County Manager
JACKSONVILLE BEACH – Director of Planning and Development
MARCO ISLAND – Police Chief
MARION COUNTY – Public Services Librarian III
MARION COUNTY – Shelter Veterinarian
MARION COUNTY – Utilities Assistant Director – Operations
NEW SMYRNA BEACH – Records & Research Specialist
NORTH MIAMI – Public Works Director
NORTH MIAMI BEACH – Capital Improvement Program Manager
NORTH MIAMI BEACH – Chief Financial Officer
NORTH MIAMI BEACH – Director of Community Development

OCALA – Director of Contracts and Procurement
OCALA – Director, Water Resources
ORMOND BEACH – City Engineer
ORMOND BEACH – Public Works Director of Operations
OVERLAND PARK, KS – Deputy Human Resources Officer-Operations
PINELLAS SUNCOAST TRANSIT AUTHORITY – Operations Data Analyst
SARASOTA COUNTY – Assistant Director of Transportation
SARASOTA COUNTY – Emergency Services Public Information Officer
SARASOTA COUNTY – Financial Specialist - Public Utilities
SARASOTA COUNTY – Mosquito Management – Business Professional II
SARASOTA COUNTY – Stormwater Public Information Officer
SARASOTA COUNTY – Transportation CIP and District Coordination Professional
SUNRISE – Intern – City Manager’s Office
TAMPA – City Planning Director
TEMPLE, TX – Director of Planning and Development Services
VENICE – Utilities Director
WHITE HOUSE, TN – City Administrator

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